









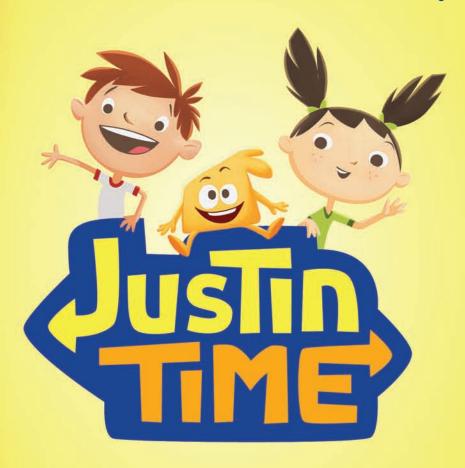








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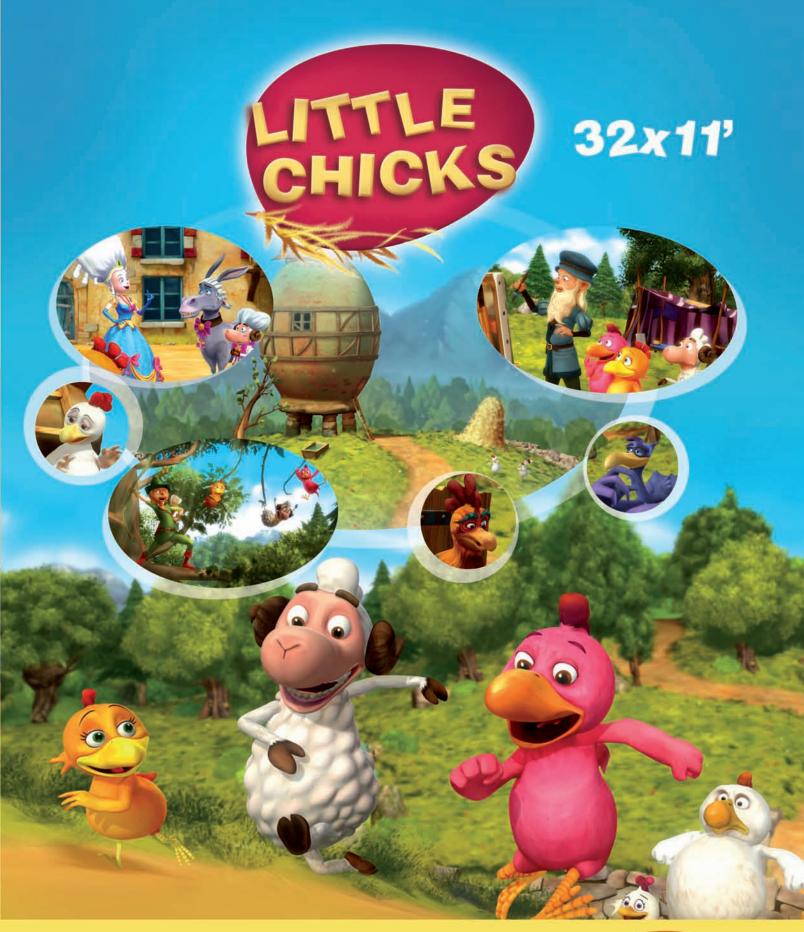
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Special Reports



Europe's licensing climate thaws post-recession • Regional merch programs shine in a global market

Cover This month's editorial cover features the leading cast of characters from new Autour de Minuit/Valk Producteries mixed-media series *Babioles*, while international and event copies sport an ad for HIT Entertainment's brand-new preschool property, Mike the Knight.

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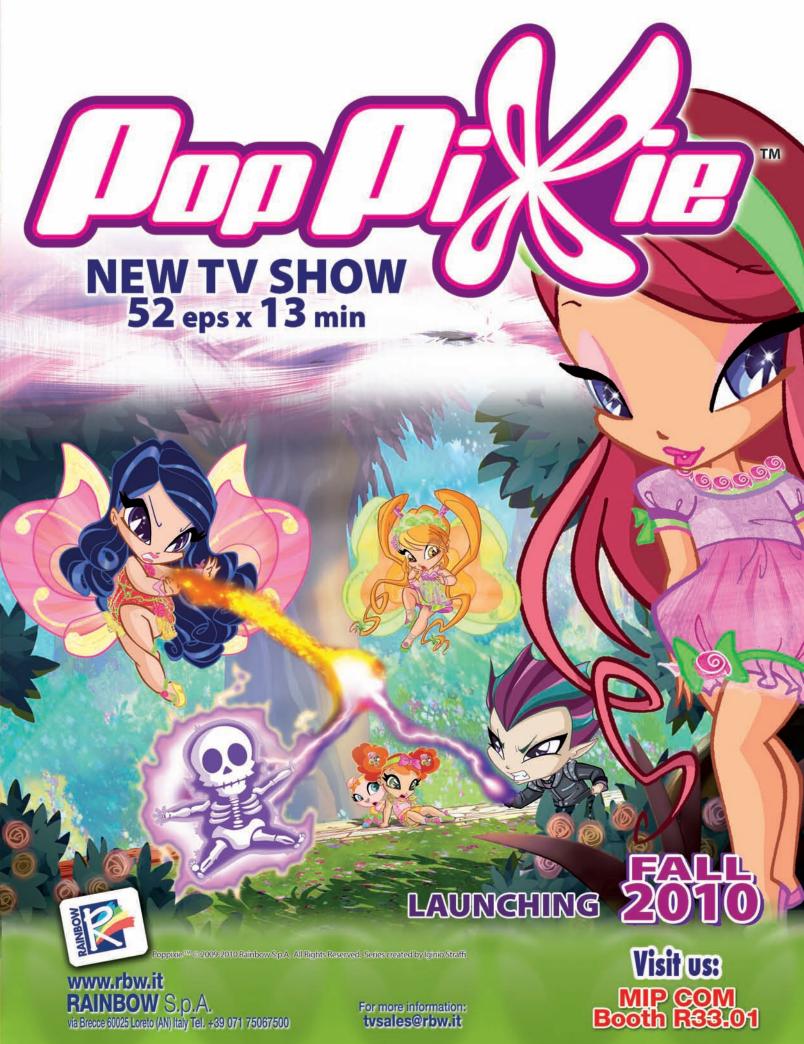
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ditorial



you'll also see in Out & About (page 24), I attended San Diego Comic-Con for the first time. Primarily known as the epicenter of geekdom, the consumer-facing show hasn't historically been on KidScreen's travel itinerary. We tend to focus on attending industry events to get a read on what fans, like the ones attending Comic-Con, will be watching and buying 18 to 24 months from now—not just a few weeks ahead of their release dates. However, I decided to trek down because event's professional component is getting to such a size that it's hard to ignore.

While primarily there to sell collector's items to the 125,000-plus fan boys and girls traipsing through the convention center, major kids players such as Mattel, Hasbro, Disney, Nick and Cartoon Network were there in full force. On the biz side, much of the wheeling and dealing taking place—and there was rumored to be much—occurred behind padlocked doors. Or in the case of the agent confab I witnessed, where three would-be Ari Golds were loudly dissing the script of a blockbuster-in-the-making over beers at a local pub, discussions were too premature and full of posturing to be credible. So, compared to a MIPCOM, for example, Comic-Con wasn't entirely useful for me.

That said, I did get to take in the full marketing power of the Hollywood studios firsthand—they never turn it on for the trade guite like they do for consumers. During a giant press panel for Disney's upcoming Tron Legacy, in which all the lead actors and the studio execs involved were in attendance, I learned that Oscar nominee Michael Sheen is positively witty and charming, that new hunk-of-the-month Garrett Hedlund is as inarticulate as you might expect and that The Dude Jeff Bridges is, well, righteous.

What did I discover about the movie? Uh...does it matter when the warm, bright light of Hollywood is shining upon you like a second sun? And that's when I became acutely aware of how the event works on a consumer level. It's really quite easy to get swept away by the hype and imported star power, and I'm not exactly a fan girl. Combine all that hoopla with fans who liveand-breathe these comic book and fantasy worlds and it approaches a nearreligious experience, I'm thinking.

Cheers, Lana



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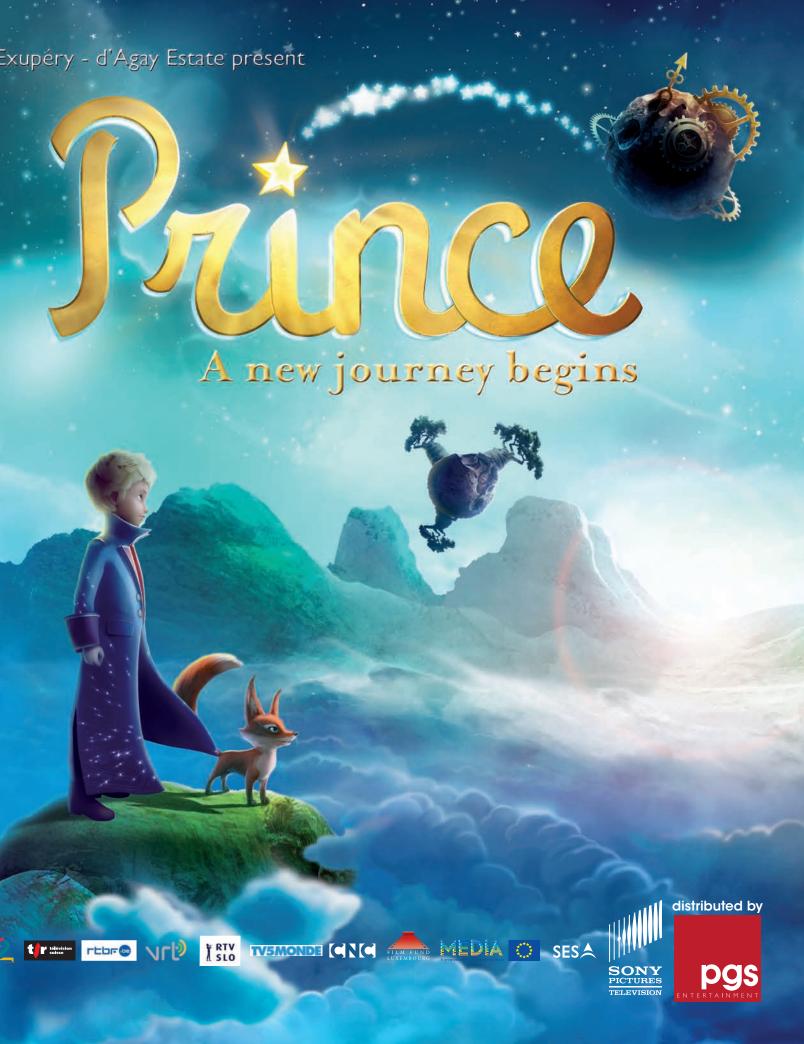












KIDSCREEN OUT & ABOUT

ON THE INDUSTRY TRAIL...

Well...between pushing our September and October issues out the door pretty much on top of each other, mapping out the conference program for KidScreen Summit, running Transmedia Bootcamps in Europe and Canada, accepting entries for KidScreen Awards, and rolling out phase two of KidScreen Connect, we have pretty much been chained to the office lately!

But before all of these projects piled up to keep us so busy, Lana and Gary had a chance to expand their horizons by hitting events that are brand-new to the KidScreen travel circuit.



GARY GETS IN TOUCH WITH HIS BUDDHA MIND AT SPP...

Gary spent the night in a Korean Buddist Temple as part of the annual Seoul Promotion Program that facilitates pitching and deal-making between Korean producers and international buyers & investors. The 20-hour temple sleepover included lectures, meditation, a strict vegetarian diet, and an

instructor named Yo Yo who helped SPP's international guests get in touch with their "Buddha Minds." The 4:00 a.m. wake-up was admittedly a little rough, but Gary did take home the comfy grey ensemble.

...WHILE HIGH-OCTANE PROMOTIONS FLOOD THE SHOW FLOOR AT COMIC-CON

And in another vein entirely, Lana's retinas are still recovering from the visual assault of the Comic-Con exhibition hall and the 125,000+ exuberant fans it attracts—including some families who chose to spend their holidays there this year. Odd it may seem, but it is also certainly indicative of the growing potential for family-centric IPs at this event that has traditionally skewed more sci-fi and fantasy. How much potential, you ask? Enough that Mattel, Lego, Hasbro, Cartoon Network, Disney, Nickelodeon and The Hub were all there in full brand force.

COMING SOON-WE'RE ABOUT TO LAUNCH A MARKET RESEARCH SERVICE!

After many months of planning and lining up the pieces, I am really excited to announce that KidScreen will be rolling out a new subscription service designed to arm you with the intelligence and data you need to ID the right buyers for your programs, and then successfully sell them in with an informed and thoughtful pitch.

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We'll be taking pre-orders for this ground-breaking new product at MIPCOM, so **email today to schedule a meeting with Lauren Talledo (Italledo@brunico.com)** if you're interested in finding out more during the market.

UPCOMING ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

@!&#—Now What? KidScreen's Focus on Production Services

We're remodeling our last issue of year to take an in-depth look at the myriad production services that underpin the global kids television industry. This special publication will break down into sections that explore the latest developments, trends and business models at work in the broad service categories of Production, Post-Production, Audio, Talent, Interactive and Distribution. If you're in the business of helping producers get their kids shows made and delivered, this is the perfect platform for letting our readers know who you are and what you do.

The KidScreen Calendar

Let's face it: Even in the age of iPhones, Blackberrys and Outlook, we all still look at wall calendars for quick date-checks from time to time. And wouldn't it be great if you had one that was pre-loaded with all of the kids entertainment industry's most important markets and events?

We've got it covered! KidScreen is planning an annual calendar that will be sent to our 10,000-plus subscribers with the January 2011 issue. And we're looking for companies to brand each month of this handy reference tool. Book now to put your stamp on the big-market months people will be flipping to frequently!

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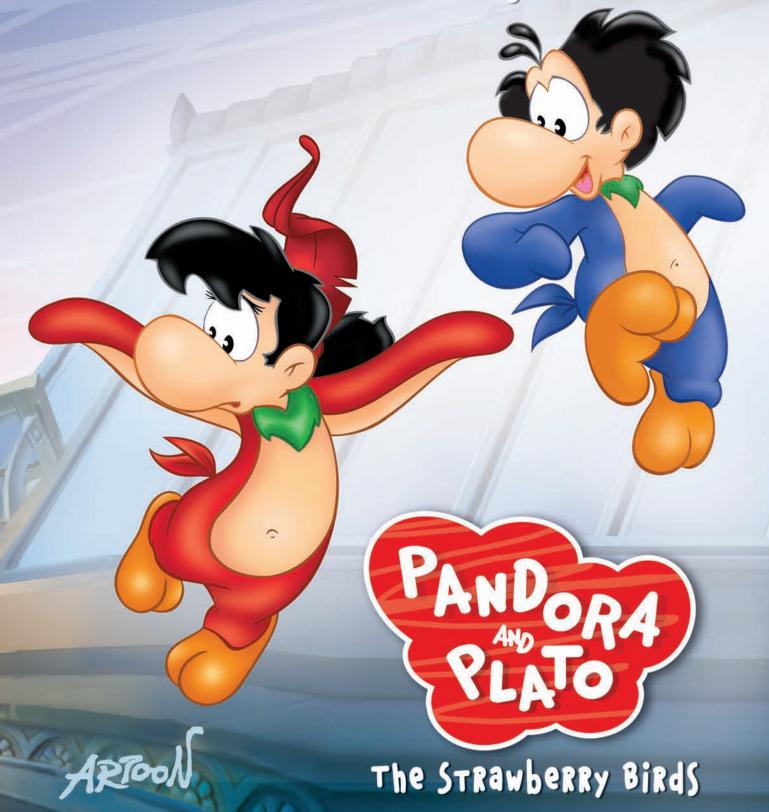
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fter taking the summer to get settled into his new gig as SVP of international distribution and development at Hasbro Studios, Finn Arnesen will be hitting the ground running in Cannes next month as he officially kick-starts the company's business outside the US. Charged by Hasbro CEO Brian Goldner and Stephen Davis, president of Hasbro Studios, at the outset to "come in and roll out our international business," Arnesen has winnowed the broad remit down somewhat. He's making sure the studio's development slate will travel well outside the American market and is busily lining up Euro broadcast homes for said content.

As he moves over to distribution, coming off his 17 years on the broadcast programming and commissioning side of the equation at Turner International, Arensen's looking forward to pitching prospective partners. "In all my years as a commissioner and a producer, I was still a salesperson," he says. "You have to work to get the right creatives to make a show with you, so you're selling yourself in a way."

While he's set his sights on lining up broadcast homes in the big-five Euro territories (UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy) for Hasbro Studios' first slate, Arnesen is on the lookout for a topnotch sales director to oversee the burgeoning business. (He'll also bring in some technical rights management support once things really get rolling.) And he's not necessarily limiting his search to the usual suspects, either. "I don't want traditional sales people," he says. "I'm looking to bring in individuals who have complementary,

but not necessarily direct, skill sets." The plan is then to tackle sales in secondary markets Turkey, Russia and Poland and subsequently move into Latin America and Asia.

As for the content, Arnesen has a seat at what Davis calls the A-team table. The team, explains Davis, is the internal development structure set up to shepherd the studio's lineup and includes reps from the toyco's brand and IP teams, showrunners, and individual development execs from Hasbro Studios and JV network The Hub. "Finn is the ideal kind of executive to lead our international operations," says Davis. "He can speak the language of the broadcasters and development and creative teams...And we wanted to be sure our shows are equally informed by what the international market is looking for."

With an eye to the global market, both Davis and Arnesen say they'll be entertaining working with co-production partners, where it makes sense, and fielding pitches on wholly original concepts from individual creators over the next two years or so. Currently, however, the A-team is evaluating what Hasbro brands might be pulled out of the vault currently housing 1,500 IPs and then developed for content treatment in 2011/2012. In the meantime, the team is overseeing the production of Hasbro Studios' first 350 half hours that will make up roughly 25% of The Hub's schedule when it launches in the US on October 10.

The key Hasbro Studios series—Tranformers Prime, G.I. Joe "Hasbro Studios" continued on page 34





KidsCo ages up with new channel BigTV

nternational JV channel KidsCo launched its first brand extension over African airwaves this summer with the debut of BigTV. The a 24/7 channel skews towards kids eight to 14 and enables the brand to engage with an audience older than its established preschool target demo.

KidsCo MD of worldwide operations Paul Robinson explains that the brand's pay-TV satellite platform based in Nigeria, My TV, instigated the launch. My TV was so pleased with KidsCo's performance in its first 18 months—it became the top-rated kids channel on the satellite service—that it requested a programming proposition to appeal to older kids. My TV now offers both KidsCo and BigTV in its basic package to all subscribers.

BigTV, which went live on August 1 and broadcasts across sub-Saharan Africa, features 100% live-action programming. (KidsCo, on the other hand, devotes one-third of its lineup to live action.) Headlining the initial slate of series are Even Stevens, which originally aired on Disney Channel, BBC's Tracy Beaker, distributed by eOne, and 100 Deeds for Eddie McDowd, which originally aired on Nickelodeon. Chuck Finn, My Parents are Aliens and There's a Monkey in My Bed are also on the roster, drawn from KidsCo's library of partner content.

And when it came to branding the extension, KidsCo realized it would have to be savvy in choosing a name that appealed to older kids.

"When they get to be around 10, they don't want to be called kids anymore, so if you label something a kids product, they'll reject it," says Robinson. BigTV emerged from a brainstorming session and borrows similar KidsCo branding in terms of color scheme and logo design and will be promoted on KidsCo's feed.

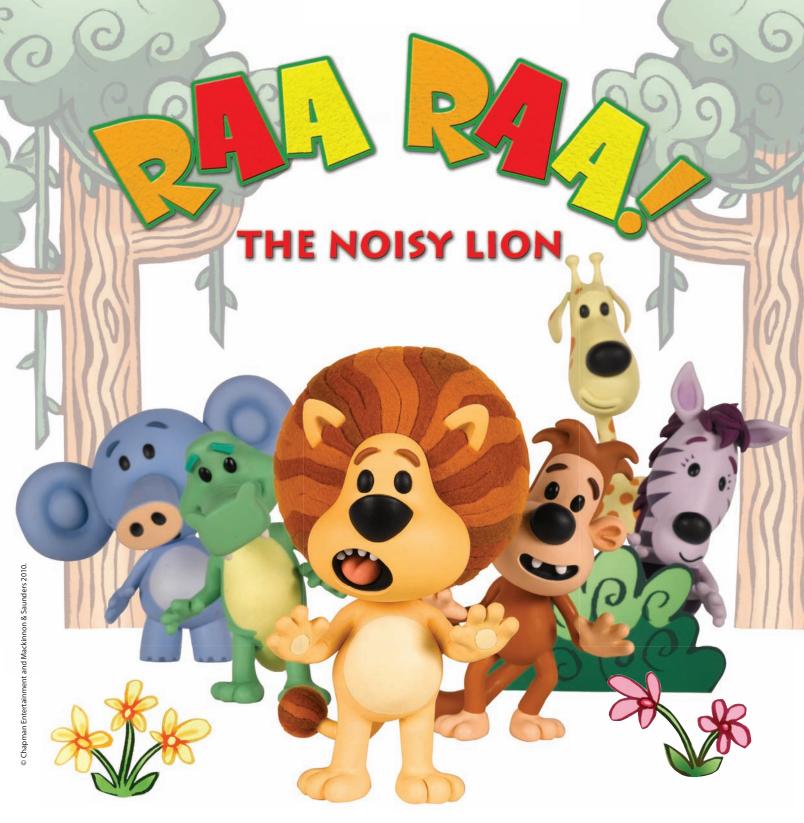
Initial publicity for the channel has garnered some inquiries about moving BigTV into other KidsCo territories. According to Robinson, more BigTV channels are likely to roll out worldwide in the first half of 2011 in territories that already have the KidsCo platform.

Robinson says his team has amassed enough content for year one, but it is now on the lookout for great catalogue programming to go beyond that. Though no original programming is planned for the short-term, he says it could be part of the recipe if and when the channel moves beyond Africa. **KC**

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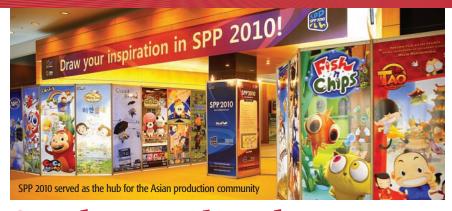
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Seoul Promotion Plan puts spotlight on Korean content

he Coex Center in downtown Seoul, Korea served as quite the hub for the Asian production and licensing community in late July. It played host to the annual content fair organized by the Seoul Animation Center with assistance of the Seoul Business Agency.

The Seoul Promotion Plan 2010 (SPP), as it's called, drew more than 400 international companies, including buyers from Disney Channel Worldwide, Cartoon Network EMEA, France Télévisions and ABC Australia.

"They really have come a long way," says Craig McGillivray, territory manager for Toronto, Canada-based DHX Media. McGillivray was an invited guest and was busy with more than 35 meetings with Korean, Chinese and Taiwanese producers throughout the conference. "Korea is a great market," he adds. "The quality of animation is just fantastic."

The conference is specifically designed to facilitate co-pro deals and broadcast sales and capital investment discussions between Korean companies and international broadcasters and distributors. Meeting rooms were set up and organizers made sure that all the visiting buyers were presented with a full menu of production possibilities throughout the three-day event.

Some noteworthy deals inked during the conference include Seoul's Nextki and Brazil-based Conrad Editora signing a sales and distribution deal for Nextki's *MoMODong* and *Adam Force*. Additionally, Nextki signed a distribution deal with The Licensing Group from L.A.

Many of the talks started at the conference will be continued during the fall markets in Cannes.

"We are looking forward to making deals regarding our new TV series soon," says Miky Jung, executive producer of Seoul-based Iconix Entertainment. "SPP 2010 was a very productive event for sales of our next season's content."

Beyond the corporate presence, the event was also geared to showcase Korea's world-renowned technical ability in animation and design to the public. Its concurrent sister events (Seoul International Cartoon & Animation Festival and the Seoul Character & Licensing Fair) attracted more than 200,000 visitors this time around. **GR**

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"Hasbro Studios" continued from page 31

Renegade, My Little Pony Friendship is Magic, Pound Puppies and Chuck—also comprise the bulk of the international distribution op's focus right now. The series are all based on pre-existing Hasbro brands and Arnesen is well-aware he might have to contend with the less-than-savory label of toy TV as he heads to market. "I can only assure everyone that these shows are good and

stand on their own," he says. "I wouldn't be doing this job if they weren't." Similarly, Davis admits that kids might tune into the series for the first time because they're aware of the brands the content is based on. "But," he contends, "if the shows aren't good, kids won't come back again." \scrick

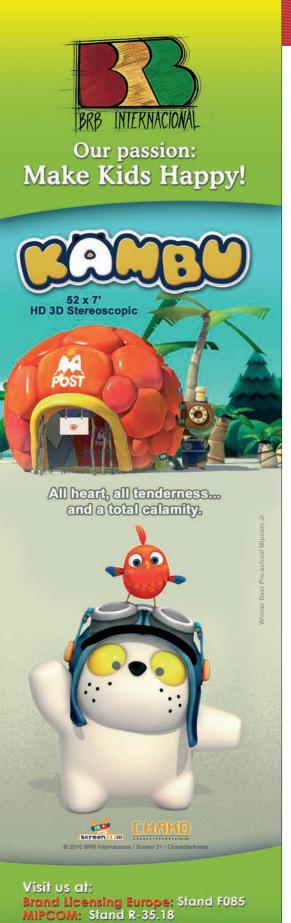


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Naughty Tortoise picks up speed

on't let the name of Ed Bignell's company fool you. The London-based producer has led a fast-paced career culminating in the launch of his production house, Naughty Tortoise.

Coming off his 2006 BAFTA and BAA nominations for his work as the director on CiTV animated series, King Arthur's Disasters, Bignell decided it was time to start synthesizing his years of varied experience in the biz. (He kick-started his animation career at Steven Spielberg's Amblimation, working on feature-length toons and moved on to produce animated sitcom Pond Life as well as stop-motion preschool series Tom and Vicky for CiTV and CBeebies' series Little Robots, among other things.) And it's taken him a few years, but he feels his shop is poised to get out in front of the kids enter-

As Naughty Tortoise MD and creative director, he's been busy building a small, but tight slate through the lens of transmedia development. So, while TV series are certainly a component of the projects, Bignall's ambitions run a little larger. He's crafting entire story worlds that can span as many media platforms as you can throw at them.

tainment industry.

The concept Bignall's most stoked about is a futuristic property he's dubbed Combatabots. Bignell describes the fantasy world at the heart of the concept as "Iron Giant meets Gladiator." Aimed at six- to nine-year-olds, it tells the tale of a teenage boy and his robot living in a fictional universe that has reverted to engaging in gladiatorial combat. At MIPCOM he'll be shopping the 26 x 24-minute CGI series that's designed to draw kids into the Combatabots world.

Combatabots is also the name of the sport played within the series through which the main protagonists compete. And the gaming element, says Bignell, "has already sparked interest from console platforms." With distribution players on-board, Bignell is looking for traditional partners

and transmedia producers/content aggregators to launch Combatabots across non-traditional media.

Bignell (left) is banking on his new

Combatabots IP to lead Naughty

Tortoise into the transmedia race

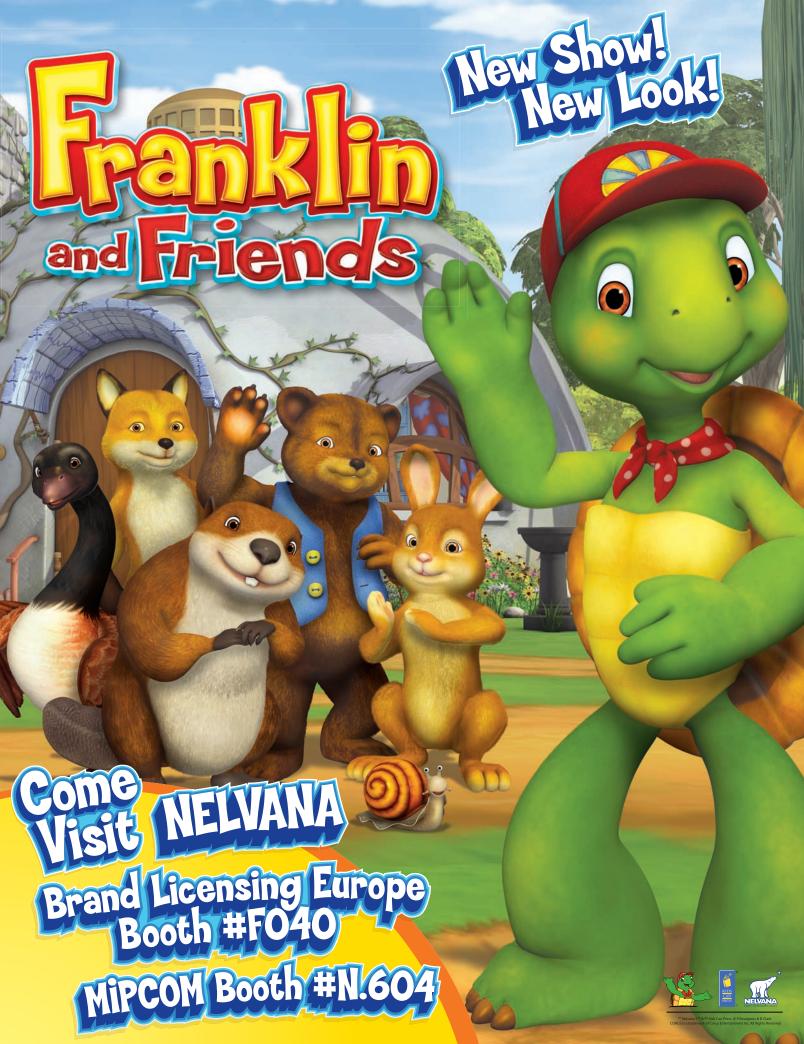
Bignell anticipates Naughty Tortoise will also get into transmedia consulting, and he's hoping to serve as a creative bridge between UK broadcasters and overseas studios. "Territories outside the UK are doing an amazing job with the quality and growth of their production industries—particularly animation. So we aim to complement this by being a partner who can handle 20% of the workload in areas that can greatly contribute to a show's success," Bignell says.

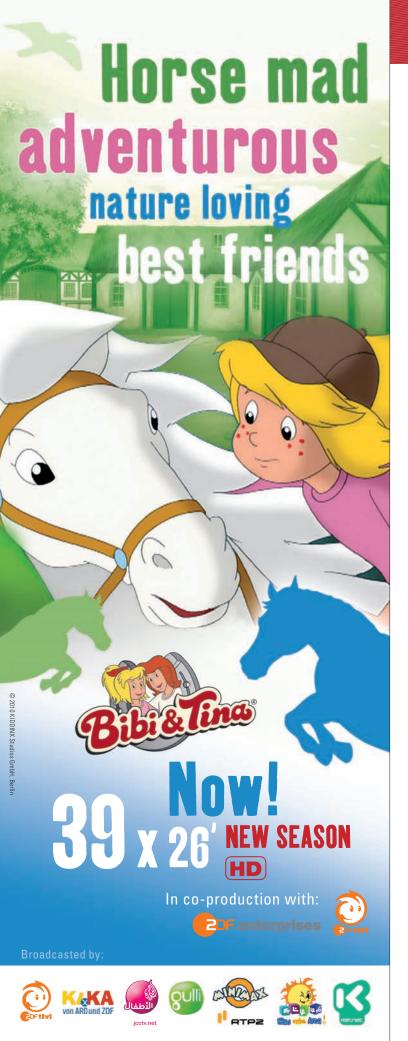
Also in Bignell's sights is the Canadian production industry. He's currently involved in a live-action kids project being produced in the country, and is following up interest from Canadian producers around Combatabots. "The UK is currently at a disadvantage with regards to its ability to compete with the government-supported territories...!'m looking at a lot of UK-Canada collaborations," he says. **WGG**



Naughty Tortoise >

www.naughtytortoise.com





Revving up for Brand Licensing

Now three days, there are even more IPs to see at the Euro-centric show

by gary rusak



Nickelodeon CP takes on new Japanese IP

Two exiled Russian mafia rabbits will take center stage at this year's show for Nickelodeon Consumer Products. The company is unveiling Usavich, an online property originating from Japan that NCP believes will be an easy sell to the international teen market. "It's slapstick comedy," says VP Laurent Taieb, who oversees NCP's French licensing operations. "Because there is no dialogue, we think it will really travel well."

The content for the original Japanese series features digital shorts that run between 90 seconds and two minutes. NCP is now in talks to further develop the concept and will be at BLE to secure partners in a number of different areas. While a master licensing agreement has already been signed with Japan's Crown Creative for the territory, Taieb says Nick is on the lookout for agents in other countries, and possibly European distribution and retailers for already-produced Japanese goods.

"We are taking a two-tiered strategy by first looking to distribute the Japanese goods and then developing localized programs," Taieb says.

Honing in on 2011, the Year of the Rabbit according to the Chinese zodiac, NCP is looking to Chinese New Year in February and Easter in April to make a splash with the content on its European channels. As for accompanying merch, Taieb has put finding video game, apparel, plush and gift licensees at the top of his list.

BBCW looks for deals that Zing

On its home turf, BBC Worldwide is getting ready for its 12th appearance at Brand Licensing Europe with a newly designed booth that will include a walk-through experience and a private viewing theater for all guests and possible partners. A highlight at the booth will be new preschool property ZingZillas. The music-based IP is looking to capture the attention of boys and girls ages four to five, and BBCW wants to grow its current 17-partner licensee list.

The series, which debuted on CBeebies in April, is set on a tropical island where everyone chips in to create music. The main characters Zak, Tang, Panzee and Drum are mentored by music guru DJ Loose, and they come together to create the unique ZingZilla sound.

UK master toy licensee Vivid Imaginations will be unveiling its first line of ZingZilla toys, which are headed to retail shelves in the territory in time for the Christmas shopping season. The range includes musical and talking plush toys, outdoor products and games. Examples of new lunchware, apparel and health & beauty products will also be at the show. However, there is still lots of room in the program, and BCCW intends to expand into other ancillary categories for a second wave of products in 2011.

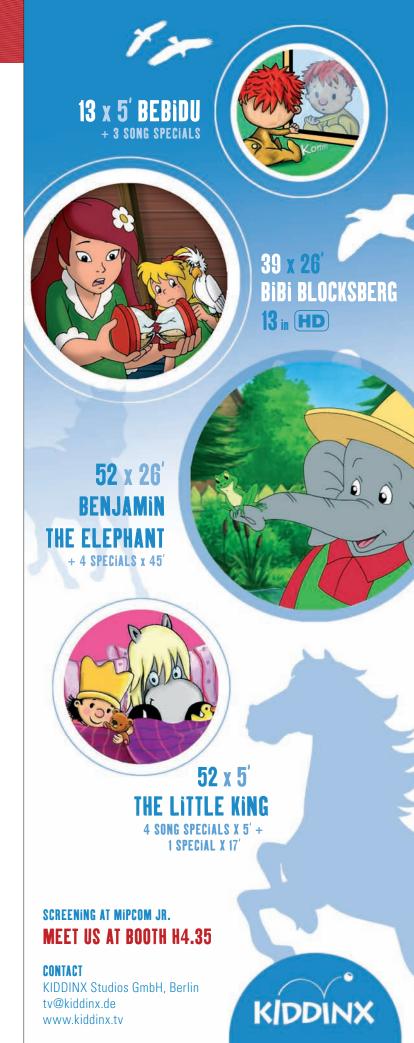


DHX picks up CBeebies' Rastamouse

Toronto, Canada-based DHX Media will be grooving to the soothing sounds of sunshine music with its new preschool reggae/crime-fighting IP Rastamouse. A preschool series of the same name is set to launch on commissioning UK net CBeebies in spring 2011 and DHX is looking after both licensing and TV distribution rights.

"It certainly looks different from other preschool series out there now," says Polly Beel, director of merchandising and licensing at DHX Media. Arguably a first for CBeebies, the series places stop-motion characters on 2-D animated backgrounds and stars a reggae band, The Easy Crew, whose mouse members also like to solve crimes in their spare time.

"Brand Licensing preview" continued on page 75



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A closer look at writing comedy for kids that will have 'em rolling in the aisles

he first rule about fart club is you don't talk about fart club. Or at least it's the overarching sentiment behind the doorknob/safety game currently tickling the funny bones of the under-10 crowd. It goes something like this. If your friend farts, you can quickly call out "doorknob!" and earn the right to punch said friend in the arm until he/she is able to locate a doorknob

and then touch it. However, shouting "safety!" upon farting invokes immunity and the players are made to wait until the next time someone passes gas to get their giggle-laden punch on.

Gary Pearson, head writer of DHX Media's kids sketch comedy show *That's So Weird*, broke the kid code and relayed the nuances of the game. It was his eight-year-old son who explained why exclamations of "doorknob!" and "safety!" were bouncing off the walls of the family home. And after a quick Google search, Pearson realized this underground fart club had millions of kid members across North America.

Like many other bits of comic gold he has mined from observing his son, Pearson incorporated the game into a recurring *That's So Weird* sketch that features two trouble-makers who end up constantly interrupting each other by shouting the magic words during the skit, which is slated for the upcoming season now in production.

Now writing comedy for kids isn't entirely as straightforward as conducting some kitchen-sink research with children. It's an art-form in and of itself and the genre has arguably never been more in demand. Broadcasters are striving to commission layered comedic shows that engender co-viewing, draw a wider kids demo and stand up against the likes of *The Simpsons*. With that in mind, we spoke to kids comedy veterans to unearth some of their trade secrets.

Bring in the big guns

Looking to hold onto viewers who were migrating to adult nets to watch the likes of *Saturday Night Live*, Canadian kidnet YTV took the step to commission its first sketch comedy in 2008. Pearson, who started out at Toronto's Second City and went on to write for *MadTV* and Canuck political satire *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, explains that YTV and DHX Media focused on building a strong sketch comedy team first and then set about making the series kid-friendly. Out are references to sex and politics, but Pearson says there's still a lot of territory to mine for jokes—embarrassment, relationships, parody, physical comedy, the list goes on. "It doesn't matter if you're five or 95," he explains, "you'll laugh at someone falling down, if it's done the right way."

Many of the parodies and send-ups speak to kid-specific popular culture, like a sketch called "Home School Musical," a commercial for pizza pants that you re-heat to eat by walking around, or an "on the street" segment in which a female cast member asks adult passersby who is cuter, her or "her sister" Justin Bieber. For parents, there's a parody of Susan Boyle featuring the Scottish singer warbling operatic ditties about the need for kids to clean their rooms, which in turn relates to how children might perceive her music—old, tired, perhaps a bit screechy.

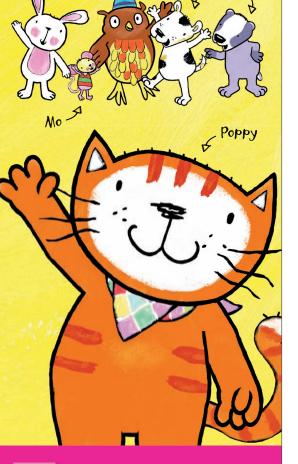
For Ben Ward, a scribe for CBBC's *Horrible Histories* and *M.I. High*, moving to crafting comedy for kids from his training ground on primetime sketch shows wasn't a huge leap.

"You have to write what you think is funny," says Ward. He admits, however, that the clever, witty dialogue found in series like Friends only entertains children for so long. "You can only do that for a couple of lines then someone dressed as a bear needs to run in," he says. When writing for the character Basil Brush, for example, Ward says he had a guiding rule—a scene could only last one page before he made a point of cutting away to another visual, even if it seemed slightly out of context. "You need the turnover in visual ideas to hold kids' attention, which you don't need in a show for adults."



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How laughs move from West to East

Mark Eyers, the Hong Kong-based VP of content at Turner Entertainment Networks Asia, looks for character-driven stories that kids can relate to when sussing out comedy series. He searches for characters with strong personalities and unique worlds where the hero can be anything from a kid to a cat.

That said, programming across Asia Pacific, a region that stretches over multiple markets from Seoul to Sydney, is a challenge—especially when it comes to selecting comedies with international appeal. Eyers says physical comedy is a sure winner in all APAC markets. Slapstick, whether it's present in animated, live-action or dialogue-laden series, always fits the bill. He looks for "sound-off TV," in which you can turn down the volume and still understand what's going on. With live action he's looking for an animated perspective (shows that are more animated in spirit and execution). He says *Tricky TV* is a good example of a show with both of these qualities.

CN uses the term trans-creation to describe the process of adapting the shows to suit local audiences across Asia Pacific. "With trans-creation, we don't simply dub a show into a local language; we also make sure that there are references to elements that are unique to a specific market," says Eyers. For example, CN Asia helped the Western-produced comedy series *Chowder* appeal to Taiwanese kids by referencing local dialects, foods and culture when it was translated into the local language.

Eyers says Western girl-focused sitcoms, however, won't work across the broad market, and as a rule he prefers animation over live action, which dates more quickly. As for travelling from East to West, he says that animated action-adventures, such as *Pokémon*, do well in North America. Physical humor, the likes of Japan's *Hole in the Wall*, has also proven very popular on Pogo in India and has just been picked up as a format by Cartoon Network US. **KC**

Layered humor

During his tenure at 1990s British sketch comedy series *SMTV*, Ward wrote for an audience split 50/50 between adults and kids. It meant keeping up the visual interest for kids, while adding a layer of grownup wit. He cites a running parody of *Bill and Ben*, a British series from the 1960s that featured two puppets in flower pots, as one of the best examples. The *SMTV* version switched out puppets for humans pretending to be puppets and involved a lot of physical comedy and surreal elements, such as giant snails moving through the scene.

The subtext, Ward explains, was that the characters were actually tramps that often had tell-tale headaches and disreputable friends stopping by to collect money. In one instance a building company was going to pave over the garden. "So we'd have jokes about bureaucracy, while having a giant wrecking ball swinging through the shot and knocking the plants over." says Ward.

Likewise, Mellie Buse, co-creator of CBeebies' Grandpa in My Pocket, makes a

point of infusing the preschool show with humor that will get a chuckle from the parents in the room. She explains that Grandpa's relationship with his pushy sister Loretta makes him emit a subtle, exasperated groan whenever she enters a scene. 'The children get, 'Oh no, not Loretta,' but it's the subtlety in the delivery that makes the parents laugh," says Buse.

Keep it real

For Buse, *Grandpa in My Pocket* hinges on the tangible relatability and emotions of the characters that counter the very fantastical concept of a grandfather who shrinks and then wreaks havoc. "Of course nobody has a shrinking grandpa, but it's played truthfully," says Buse. "If you can make those relationships credible and believable and recognizable and true, your laughs will be that much greater."

Of course *Grandpa in My Pocket* has no shortage of slapstick antics, crazy characters and ridiculous situations. And Buse says that part of what makes the show so endearing to kids is that the relationship between adults and kids has been







Skywriter Media screens the trailer to *Chuckles N' Knuckles* with the sound off to intensify the visual slapstick comedy driven by cheeky, yet sympathetic characters for whom kids will root

flipped—it's the child who is the more responsible straight-man and the adult who is being mischievous and climbing up the drainpipe or disappearing inside a vacuum cleaner.

Jeff Biederman—who has worked on the last 39 episodes of Shaftesbury's liveaction kid sitcom *Overruled!* and is now co-executive producing a live-action/CGI comedy for Teletoon called *Mudpit* from Cookie Jar Entertainment—says the gags come naturally, but it's the storytelling that can be a challenge.

"If the audience isn't connecting with with the characters, the jokes are a waste," says Biederman. He admits that a character can say something funny, but unless you care about that person, it's just a line and it goes away. The other challenge is balancing comedic gags with action. "You'll spend all this time coming up with clever lines and then in focus group tests, kids watch a character fall on his butt and that gets the biggest laugh."

Like most comedic writers interviewed for this piece, Biederman says kids are a lot smarter and savvier than most grownups realize. He says writers tend to brutally shun script notes that ask for the removal of references or words that children might not know.

"The kids don't have to get every joke," contends Biederman. "If they don't get one joke, there's another one coming up two lines later that they will get." The consensus among this group of writers is that kids will ask about or research what they don't understand. And if it just sounds funny, that's usually enough. "At eight you don't know that word, then at nine, you've heard it before, and at 10, you know the word and get the joke," says Biederman.

Squash and stretch

"Writing for animation has its own challenges," says Biederman. The medium is so visual that the words can get in the way of the story the pictures are trying to tell. "There's a huge visual element and you don't know how they will animate it, but you have some idea," he says.

Toronto, Canada-based Skywriter Media CEO Kevin Gillis, who has been producing animation for more than 25 years, says he likes to turn the sound off while watching a new toon to see if the visual comedy really works. In fact, that's how his team pitched the prodco's *Chuckles N' Knuckles*, an action-packed cheeky Ren & Stimpy-esque series about two rejected circus clowns.

"You really feel for them, but the comedy comes from how they interact with each other," says Gillis. "It's primarily the slapstick and the timing."

In creating great comedy that brings together the perfect blend of storytelling with visual gags and timing, Gillis has made a process out of bringing the writers (who are sometimes stand-up comics) and storyboard artists together for roundtable meetings in the early stages of development. He says a give-and-take usually emerges in a creative session, where storyboard artists sketch out scenes and visual ideas as writers walk through the script, triggering something more from the writers. A great animation script then, says Gillis, "is a third the writer, a third the storyboard artist and a third the actor, which is a combination of voice actor and the animator, who acts via his pencil."

LINKS	
CBBC >	www.www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc
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CBBC's showcase for animated shorts takes off

nimators and kids in the UK have a new place to go and seek out the latest cool toon projects. Broadcaster CBBC has expanded its Cartoon Works web portal to host a mini-site called My Toons that showcases animated shorts from all over the world. In fact, an international call for submissions attracted so much content, and subsequent attention, that the mini-site has become a destination for the channel's six to 12 viewers just a few weeks after its mid-summer launch.

CBBC head of acquisitions and drama development Sarah Muller explains My Toons was originally conceived as a means of supporting the UK animation industry by providing a limited low-risk window for creators to promote a character or concept and earn a small license fee. Her plans have changed since the mini-site helped bump traffic up across most of CBBC's animation-based sites by 50% in its first four weeks.

"The success of My Toons, in terms of numbers, means that we might just carry on mixing it up a bit with existing content from around the world—it seems to be a showcase that isn't normally available for our audience," says Muller. However, she adds that promoting, supporting and encouraging homegrown UK animation remains the prime focus. And, of course, there's the possibility that some shorts could become potential pilots.

To that end, CBBC's acquisitions team pitches in, scouring the industry for new animation from sources that range from budding under-18 animators and experienced independents to established studios. Single pieces of content varying in length from 10 seconds to just under four minutes are ideal for MyToons. Muller also enlisted the help of external project managers like Aardman alum Helen Brunsdon, who bring with them encyclopedic knowledge of the animation industry, to get the minisite up and running.

Muller says the last several months spent tracking down cool and unique comedic content has paid off by imbuing My Toons with a YouTube-like sense of



My Toons takes submissions from animators worldwide and provides a YouTube-esque, kid-friendly place for CBBC's audience to see new animation

novelty and surprise in a safer environment for kids. As a result, it shot to the top of the most-watched content on CBBC's website in its first month online.

Every week, My Toons features a new set of five shorts, and the five from the preceding week join a see-more-videos area at the bottom of the page. The most successful shorts, determined by measuring views and compiling kid ratings scores, will be presented as a My Toonsbranded 15-minute primetime block that will run on CBBC on special occasion days throughout the year (i.e. Bank Holiday Monday in August, Halloween and Christmas). "Shorts can get lost in a schedule," says Muller. "This is a way of really promoting them-the block will be repeated over and over again during a very good spot on the schedule."

Muller's team is constantly on the lookout for new content and welcomes submissions either by email to mytoons@ bbc.co.uk or snail mail to My Toons, Room E817, BBC TVC, Wood Lane, London, W12 7RJ. In addition, a link for pitching content via the site is in the works. So far, My Toons' programming is set for the near future, although the schedule tends to shift with the rush to get material in-house. **KC**

LINKS

My Toons >

www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/mytoons













Reveille reveals animation plans, partnership with Hanna-Barbera alum

eveille, the L.A.-based prodoo known for its raft of adult live-action TV hits such as *The Office*, *Ugly Betty* and *The Biggest Loser*, is entering the animation fray.

VP of scripted programming Todd Cohen says Reveille's step into toons has been percolating over the last year. "The business model appeals to us," he says. "If you can find a successful animated show, there are many ways to exploit it and it travels well internationally."

Kicking off the push into animated content, the studio recently announced an exclusive first-look deal with Mechem Media, an L.A.-based company founded by former Hanna-Barbera execs and family. The shop is planning to extend Hanna-Barbera's signature 2-D animation style and tone to new stories and characters, which Reveille will help bring to life on TV and online.

The partnership will see Reveille working with Mechem to develop concepts from start to finish, including fleshing out series treatments and bringing in the right show runners. "We'll be working alongside Mechem every step of the way, developing content that is ready for today's TV market-place," says Cohen.

The first series out of the gate for the pair is *The Gloomers*, a family-friendly 2-D comedy series reminiscent of *The Flintstones* and *The Jetsons*. Cohen says the premise—in which the unluckiest family in the world just happens to live next door to the luckiest one—lends itself to the layered humor that resonates so well with kids and adults.

Though Reveille is aiming to develop an initial batch of family-friendly, primetime

animated projects, it's very open to tailoring content to meet the needs of kidcasters.

"Our intent is that *The Gloomers* will suit a broadcaster targeting the whole family, whether it's Fox or TBS," says Cohen. "But there's definitely a version of *The Gloomers* that could live on a children's channel," he says.

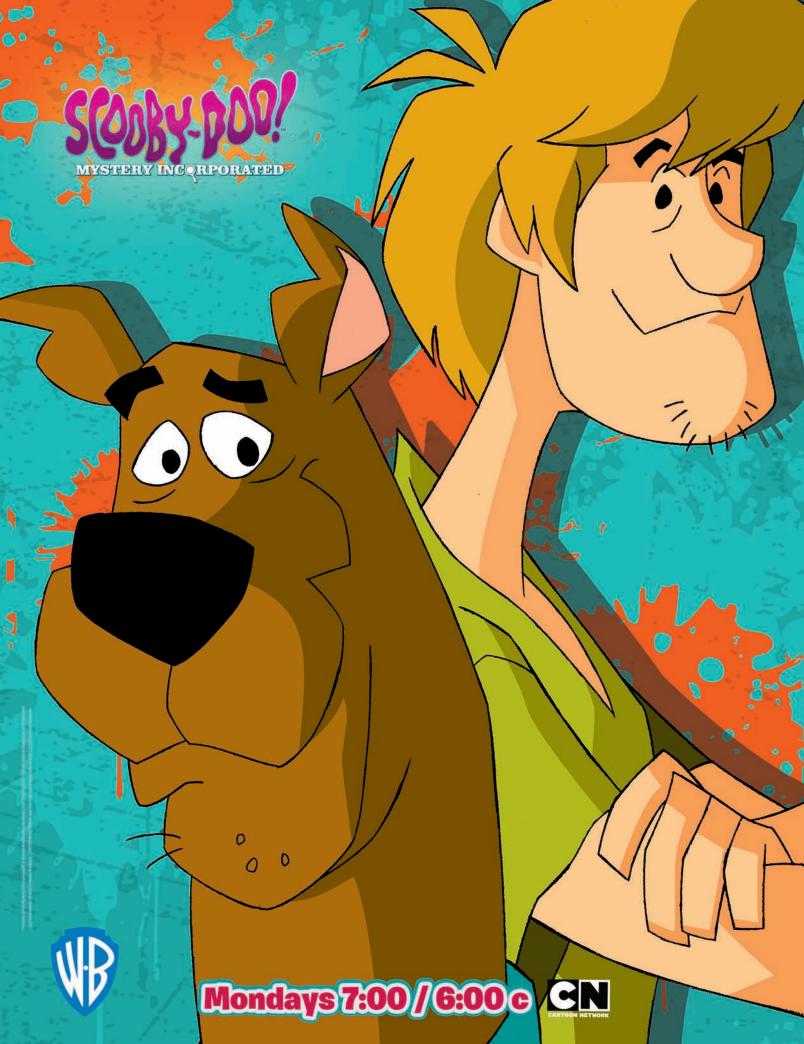
In addition to the partnership with Mecham, Reveille has a few other animated series in the works. Last year the company paired up with game-based studio Machinima.com in L.A. to conduct a comedy lab. It drew a battery of top TV writers who came up with 15 ideas over the course of the lab, yielding a concept that's being prepped as a presentation for US net Fox. As well, the prodco has two other series that have moved to script stage at Fox and US cablenet Comedy Central, respectively. Cohen says Reveille will also be looking to produce short-form animated content for its online programming partnerships with portals such as MSN and Yahoo.

Besides animation, Reveille intends to make a bigger mark on the kids scene in general. Last year Reveille began incorporating youth programming into its repertoire with tween-targeted live-actioner, *Gigantic*. The series has just started airing on TeenNick in the US, and EVP of scripted programs Carolyn Bernstein says she's open to taking on more series that target young audiences. **KC**

LINKS

Reveille >

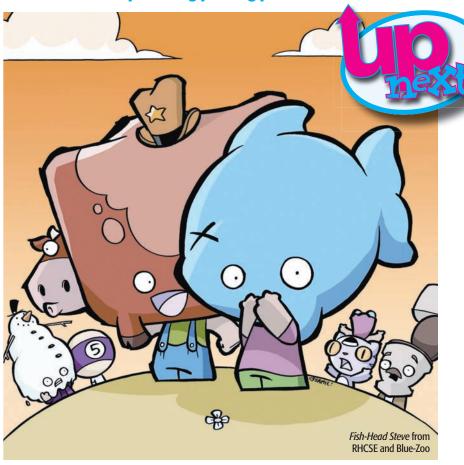
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Cartoon Forum preview

Sopron, Hungary is set to host the annual Euro animation fest this month, so prepare before you get there by checking out some of the more promising pending pitches



Something's fishy about this toon

A curious thing has happened in the sleepy mid-western town of Spumville. Everyone awoke one morning to find that their heads had been replaced by household objects and family pets. So it's now up to a 12-year-old named Fish-Head Steve to investigate what happened while the townsfolk rush around blaming the mishap on everything from the local chemical plant to a recent alien invasion. (Not that the extra-terrestrials realize anything out of the ordinary is afoot.)

Steve may be on a mission to restore order, but in the meantime the residents of Spumville must get used to their new noggins and carry on with everyday activities, such as holding parades, baseball games and embarking on camping trips. Having a loaf of bread or a fish for a head, however,

proves treacherous, especially when surrounded by a flock of birds, for example,

Aimed at boys eight to 12, the 52 x 11-minute series Fish-Head Steve is based on a comic strip of the same name. Executive producer Catherine Robins from London-based Random House Children's Screen Entertainment (a ioint-venture between publisher Random House and Kommix Entertainment) says the animation will retain the comic strip's feel and vivid color palette. And the fledgling prodco is working with London-based Blue-Zoo on production. A delivery date hasn't been set, but Robins is ready to shop the trailer around. The first season of scripts is underway with a proposed series budget of \$US3.9 million.

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When you're young at heart

Imagine falling asleep and waking up decades later as an old man or woman, but with the mindset of a child. That is exactly the premise of Mau & the Grandkids, a coproduction from Screen 21 and Genoma Animation, with BRB Internacional onboard as distributor. The 52 x 15-minute CGI comedy series for kids six to nine stars 10-year-old Mau who, after falling asleep from an exhausting game of bocce ball, wakes up 89 years later as an old man. Having skipped the aging process, Mau still has the same spirit, curiosity and naivety of any youngster. But his body reflects his advanced years, and now climbing Mt. Everest involves stopping every five minutes to go to the bathroom, and the latest in high tech refers to advances in denture wear

Of course, Mau still has all of his old pals, such as his best friend Tony, a retired

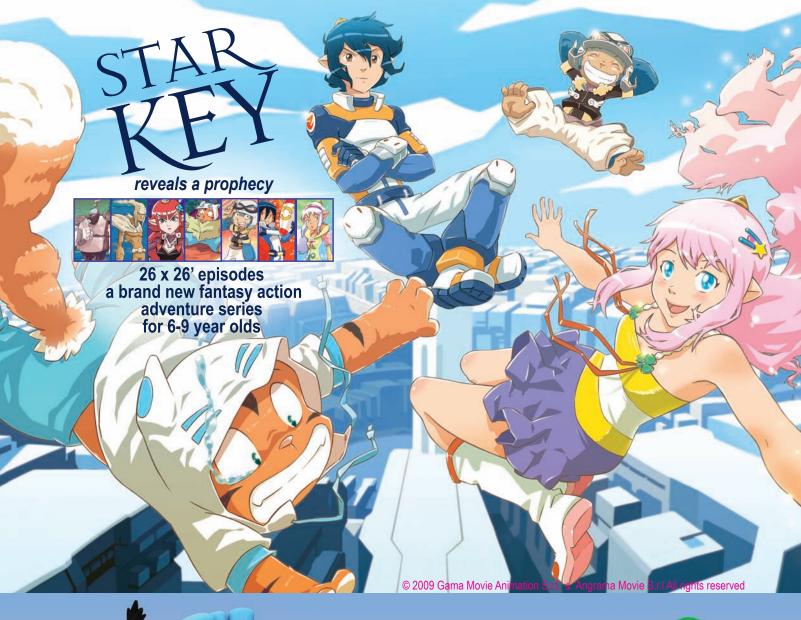
mechanic and genius inventor, and ornery Jacob, a wise 120-year-old with poor hearing and a bad memory. The aging, crotchety crew, however, partake in lively adventures like starring on game shows and breeding an unruly number of pigeons. Bringing a breath of fresh air to the old folks is great niece Sophia, a smart and talkative 13-year-old girl whose modernday sense of fashion, music and next-gen gadgetry is relatable, but causes flare-ups with Mau.

Screen 21 and Genoma are working toward an unspecified delivery date in 2012 with a budget of US\$6.4 million.

Lost toys take on the real world

Ever wonder what happens to the small plastic toys you worshipped as a child, but carelessly abandoned as you moved into adulthood? Well, 13 x 2.5-minute CGI comedy *Babioles* is aiming to tell their live-action







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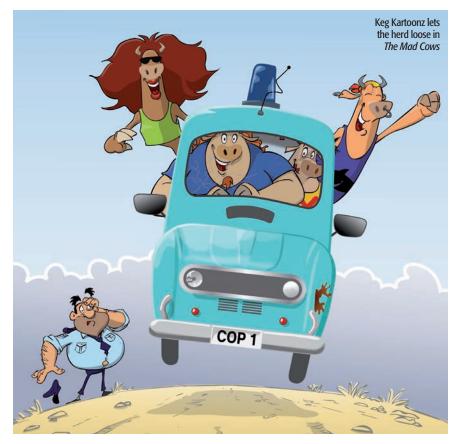
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tales. Targeting tweens and teens, the coproduction from Autour de Minuit in Paris and Netherlands-based Valk Producteries follows the plight of the small animated toys as they move about in the real world.

The stylistic series shows the cute, cartoonish characters, including an affectionate rabbit, a curious bear and a disoriented penguin, in live-action settings filmed from the toys' point of view. In fact. Autour de Minuit has created a documentary-style feel to the series, shooting scenes as if a tiny film crew were following the playthings as they embark on their daily adventures. In one instance, for example, a phone ringing on a desk creates a deafeningly loud earthquakelike effect for the Babioles. Suddenly a large hand surges out of nowhere to grab the phone and we hear a distant "Hello" uttered by an adult office worker.

With a presale to French cabsat net Canal+ in place, Autour de Minuit is working with a budget of approximately US\$773,000. So far there's a pilot and first season's worth of scripts in the can, and preproduction is expected start in November for a June 2011 delivery.

Keg debuts colony of Mad Cows

On a peaceful, moonlit night in the rural hills of Ireland, a herd of cattle graze as a bolt of lightning suddenly strikes. When the cows recover, one pair finds it has acquired human traits—the cows can stand upright, speak and use opposable hooves. The two mammals realize they are not alone in the world and go on a mission to find others like them, eventually forming a bizarre band of bovines labeled The Mad Cows.

The animated 26 x 12-minute series for kids six to 10 is an original in-house production from Dublin, Ireland-based Keg Kartoonz, created by writer and director Noel Kelly.

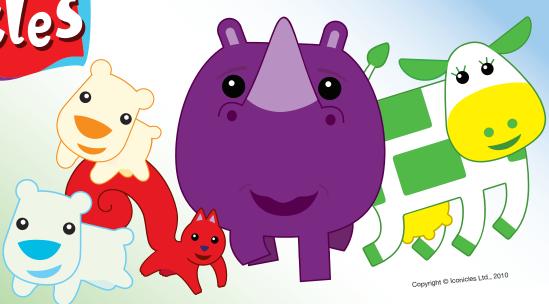
The motley crew of crazy cattle roams far and wide in an RV loaded to the nines with extreme sports equipment. It comes in handy for getting out of nasty scrapes, such as a tightrope walk over the Grand Canyon or a pole vault over the Great Wall of China. In each episode, the gang in *Mad Cows* crosses paths with humans and often becomes embroiled, unwittingly, in evil homo sapien schemes. However, they always manage to foil the villainous plots.

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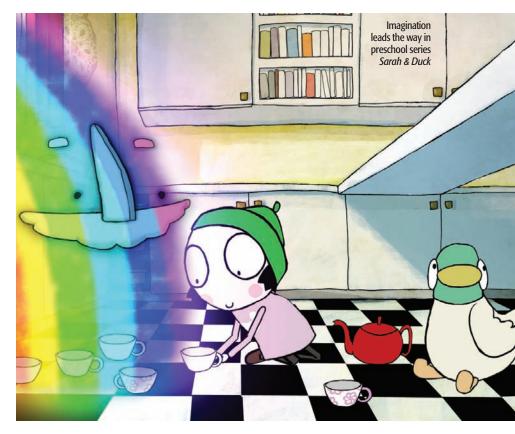
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The cows also often find themselves embroiled in debacles that impart enviro-conscious lessons. In one episode, their involvement in a bog-snorkeling champion-ship involves an illegal dumping operation. On another occasion, the cattle are shocked to discover they are responsible for much of the Earth's methane build-up—one of the causes of the hole in the ozone layer.

The first 15 eps are scheduled to head into production in October and Keg Kartoonz is working with a per-episode budget of approximately US\$77,000.

A quacking good series

Everyday is a new adventure for quiet, yet curious, seven-year-old Sarah and her quacky, flappy, slightly manic best friend, Duck. This 37 x seven-minute preschool series from London's Karrot Animation is aimed at kids two to five and follows the pair as they perform everyday tasks with imaginative and sensory zeal. Each day brings a new experience in which Sarah and Duck gain an understanding of the world, even if it's in a very roundabout, fantastical way.

A narrator guides the audience through the scenes in *The Simple but Exciting*

Adventures of Sarah & Duck and also offers friendly, helpful suggestions and commentary to the two protagonists. Other characters include Rainbow, which of course shows up after a rainfall, the old sweet scarf lady who has a bag that says "hold me" when she puts it down, a donkey that appears very sad but is actually quite content, and a small scared bug that lives in a house plant.

The original concept was created inhouse by Karrot staffer Sarah Gomes Harris and is based on autobiographical fantasy adventures she shared with her own Duck. Director Jamie Badminton says UK-based Channel Five is sponsoring the series at Forum and he is looking for the prodco's first partners and funding/presales. Karrot has several completed scripts and is working with an approximate budget of US\$2.2 million towards a fall 2010 delivery date. **KC**

INKS	
Autour de Minuit >	www.autourdeminuit.com
Blue Zoo >	www.blue-zoo.co-uk
BRB Internacional >	www.brb.es
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homas & Friends, Bob the Builder, Angelina Ballerina, Fireman Sam, Barney and Pingu; HIT Entertainment's

roster of brands is a stand-alone pre-school Hall of Fame. And new property, Mike the Knight, is set to extend HIT's

enviable record well into the future. Here HIT's President and



CEO Jeff Dunn explains why he fully expects Mike to live up to his motto - "be a knight, do it right"!

Mike the Knight follows the adventures of a young apprentice knight as he attempts to help mum. Queen Martha, run their tiny kingdom while his father, the King, is away exploring distant lands. Assisting Mike are his closest friends Sparkie and Squirt, a pair of tame dragons and his trusty horse Galahad. And, with a sprinkling of magic comes younger sister Evie, who often makes Mike's missions more of a challenge, as she has yet to master the skills of good wizardry!

full of turreted castles, fantastic creatures, and magical adventures. Nevertheless his little kingdom,

and the people who live there, are remarkably like our own world and the people we meet every day.

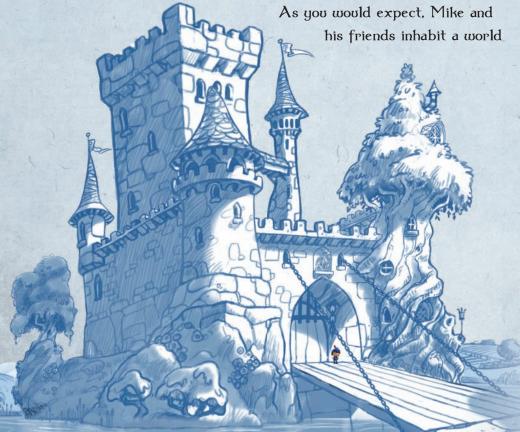


Mike the Knight is

only the second series HIT Entertainment has developed inhouse, from initial concept through to final delivery. The first one was Bob the Builder, so, if, like most medieval knights, you believe in omens - Mike's are looking pretty good!

"HIT grew to the company it is today largely through acquisitions," notes President & CEO Jeff Dunn, "and so when I came on board, I felt it was important we grew an ability to develop our own properties inhouse and from scratch."

The first result of that investment in development personnel and budgets is Mike the Knight, a co-production with Canada's Nelvana. The CGI series, aimed at 3-5 year-olds, was created by Alexander Bar and is being



Executively Produced by HIT's Chris Rose and Marion Edwards. Set for delivery in Fall 2011, it has already secured pre-sales of the first 52 x 12-minute episodes to CBeebies, Treehouse, ABC Australia, DRTV Denmark, NRK Norway and SVT Sweden.



"The most attractive thing about Mike as a proposition," insists Dunn, "is that there are so many great stories that can be

told in a multitude of different and attractive ways. That is always what we look for first in any property, the ability it offers to tell great stories."

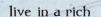
And Mike the Knight has plenty of other exciting attractions. "The reality is that today's pre-school programming is a very licensing-driven business," acknowledges Dunn, "and although we didn't set out looking for a property that ticked all those consumer product

ADVERTORIAL

boxes, it is certainly the case that Mike does exactly that!"

Underlining this point, Dunn stresses, "It promises to be a fantastic property inspiring great play sets as well as action adventure toys. The medieval setting offers equally strong potential for dressing-up and apparel of all kinds. Its castles and mazes will work perfectly for board games and video games. And with its big, grand and colourful look, it's just what a pre-school property needs to be in publishing." In short, concludes Dunn, "whenever we speak to a potential partner the reaction is always, 'I can see how this property plays in my field', which is exactly what we are looking for."

Of course all of this is commercially attractive, but Mike's ability to translate so easily into so many different areas and onto so many different platforms is vitally important in another crucial way. "These days," explains Dunn, "kids



media environment and they want their characters to be available to them all the time in the many different places they visit during the course of their day. They want to watch the character, play with the character in their homes and online, they want to wear the character and to go to sleep with him or her at night. Delivering this universal accessibility is as much a part of designing a truly loved character as is designing the character itself."

And all the indications are that, in Mike the Knight, UIT has an exciting new character destined to be as much-loved as Thomas, Bob, Angelina, Sam, Barney and Pingu, and the other hugely successful characters to have emerged over the years from this undoubted UIT machine.



11

Extending the olive branch

Nonprofit preschool show goes worldwide and non-exclusive

today's competitive and cash-strapped kids market, asking for charitable donations to produce a series and then convincing broadcasters to air it non-exclusively might sound like a pipe dream. But that's exactly what Josh Selig has set out to do with a new preschool series being produced by his New York-based prodoc Little Airplane via its newly established nonprofit arm, Little Light Foundation.

The Olive Branch is a 26 x one-minute, hand-drawn series that focuses on presenting positive messages about conflict resolution, tolerance and mutual respect. The dialogue-free episodes feature two cute creatures (one big, one small) that share an olive tree and must find ways to resolve their differences. Living together peacefully, for example, might mean figuring out how to share a blanket on a cold night or compromising on the choice of lullaby.

For Selig, the idea for a preschool series focused on resolving conflict has been brewing since he worked on an Isreali/Palestinian co-production of *Sesame Street* back in the late 1990s.

"That was my first exposure to the impact media could have on kids in terms of really making fundamental changes in how they view one another and how they view issues like tolerance and respect," Selig says. He chose to build the idea around an international symbol of peace, the olive branch, whose meaning translates to just about any community. The series has also been endorsed by UNICEF, the Simon Wiesenthal Center and Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his foundation, which reviews storyboards for their representation of conflict resolution before an ep heads into production.

So far, Little Light Foundation has raised enough money to produce three episodes, which began airing exclusively in the US for a six-month period on Nick Jr. this spring, and on a non-exclusive basis on more than 100 Nickelodeon channels worldwide. The episodes were also recently picked up by Disney Australia.

To get the series out there, Little Light Foundation is offering the program for a license fee of one unit of a broadcaster's local currency per episode. Selig says most broadcasters are also making tax-deductible donations to the nonprofit to help cover the cost of production.

The Olive Branch's production will be carried out on an episodeby-episode basis, as piecemeal funding comes in. In fact, Selig says the series hasn't been entirely mapped out—he and his team come up with the each new episode idea as they can afford to make it. Based on donations from the small family-run Selavy Foundation in New York, Little Light has just started early development on the fourth episode.

"We're finding that people are charmed by this model and they want to be part of something that they feel good about," says Selig.



The Olive Branch, from Little Airplane's nonprofit Little Light Foundation, features two cute cohabitating characters who must learn to resolve their differences

At press time, other broadcasters taking on the series included Canal+ (France), British Forces Broadcast Service, NRK (Norway), SVT (Sweden), MHZ Networks (Washington, DC), Macedonia OXO and KidsCo UK. In addition, RVT (Slovenia) and TVO (Canada) were in negotiations.

Besides contributions from broadcasters, individuals and organizations, Little Light has also set up a new initiative called Grow A Show. It would allow donors, such as a school class, to come to the Little Airplane studio, participate in brainstorming story ideas and development on an episode and get a front-row seat to the production process.

Along with plotting a fourth episode, Selig is also working closely with the show's animator to create and pitch an Olive Branch book series. New to the world of publishing, Selig now has a literary agent on-board and is in early talks with publishers in the US and the UK.

As for other Little Light projects, Selig says he is open to making more programs that focus on themes of tolerance and mutual respect. In fact, he's in the early stages of development with Scottish producer Dana Dorian on a series called *Bolibose* about an odd village chock full of personalities that have to learn

to cope with each other and the problems that arise from their differences. **KC**

LINKS

Little Airplane Productions > www.littleairplane.com

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IP owners
are looking to
online worlds as
a new outlet for
branded products

urrent estimates have the global virtual goods market generating roughly US\$3.1 billion annually, and some analysts, like Minneapolis, Minnesota-based Piper Jaffray, forecast a conservative 25% growth in the market over the next three years. By 2013, virtual goods could be making real dollars to the tune of US\$6 billion a year, so it shouldn't come as a shock to see

IP owners eyeing the market with increasingly widening pupils. Add to that the tantalizing prospect of minimal production costs, unlimited shelf space and no shipping or storage costs, and virtual goods come as close as possible to becoming a dream licensing category.

Licensor interest in this burgeoning category might just deepen further when they learn that at present just 1% of the sales in this market come from branded virtual goods. "Brands usually represent something like 90% of sales in the real world, so we see them growing their share of virtual goods sales dramatically," says Dan Jansen, CEO and founder of Virtual Greats.

The L.A.-based firm specializes in marrying IP owners with the virtual worlds most suited to their properties. Currently, Virtual Greats clients on the IP side include Big Tent Entertainment and its Domo property, rapper Snoop Dogg and the National Basketball Association. On the platform side, kid-focused sites WeeWorld and the educational WhyWorld count themselves as clients.

"We figure out where to be and where not to be," says Jansen, describing his company as an expert navigator of a space that can be filled with polarities. And as Big Tent Entertainment CMO Rich Maryyanek puts it, most virtual worlds don't have shops or a lot of retail experience. "They know how to sell their own

goods," he says. "But they don't necessarily understand the buzz that licensed IP can create."

Not surprisingly, a vast number of virtual world hubs also don't have proper IP protection regulations, micro-transaction mechanisms or the business acumen to make traditional licensing agreements a reality. However, this is starting to change. With the emergence of consultants like Virtual Greats that work to place the right IP with the right virtual world and help set up the business conditions to make it all worthwhile, the presence of licensed goods in virtual worlds is poised to expand.

To get a read on the current landscape, it's worth backing up a second to look at just what's considered a virtual good. Essentially, it is a digital asset that can be purchased in a virtual world using a number of transaction options, including a credit card, a prepaid cash card, or any number of internet payment options.





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(At last count, the bigger virtual worlds could handle roughly a dozen different forms of payment.) The goods then fall into a number of categories. Some can enhance functionality in the world, like the rain that keeps plants from withering in Facebookbased Farmville, or a swimming pool that keeps avatars entertained in Habbo Hotel. Some goods revolve around customization, like a hair cut, hat or pair of shoes that can be purchased to give an avatar its own fashion flare. Prices for individual goods can range from a few cents all the way up

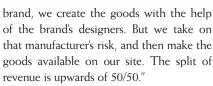
to US\$25 apiece. (This doesn't even take into account the used virtual goods market on eBay, where rare items from popular adult sites like World of Warcraft can reach into the hundreds of dollars.) And it's worth noting that much like in the real world, branded virtual goods can sell for upwards of five times the price fetched by their generic counterparts.

A good blueprint for those looking to get into the space would be the WeeWorld/ Big Tent partnership brokered by Virtual Greats. About a year ago, Big Tent started looking at putting Domo-branded goods, including virtual t-shirts, slippers and hats, into the digital space.

"We wanted to be in the teen and young adult area, so WeeWorld seemed like a natural," says Maryyanek of the popular virtual world that claims to attract about two million unique visitors a month.

WeeWorld evaluated the opportunity and decided to take it on, agreeing to produce the virtual Domo goods that could be purchased to outfit users' avatars—a.k.a. WeeMees. A revenue-sharing agreement was developed that has since become the site's standard for setting up deals for licensed goods.

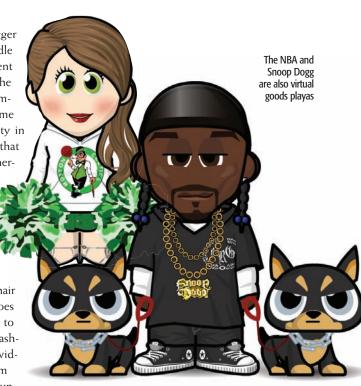
"We go into business jointly," says Maura Welch, marketing and editorial director for WeeWorld. "When we are working with a

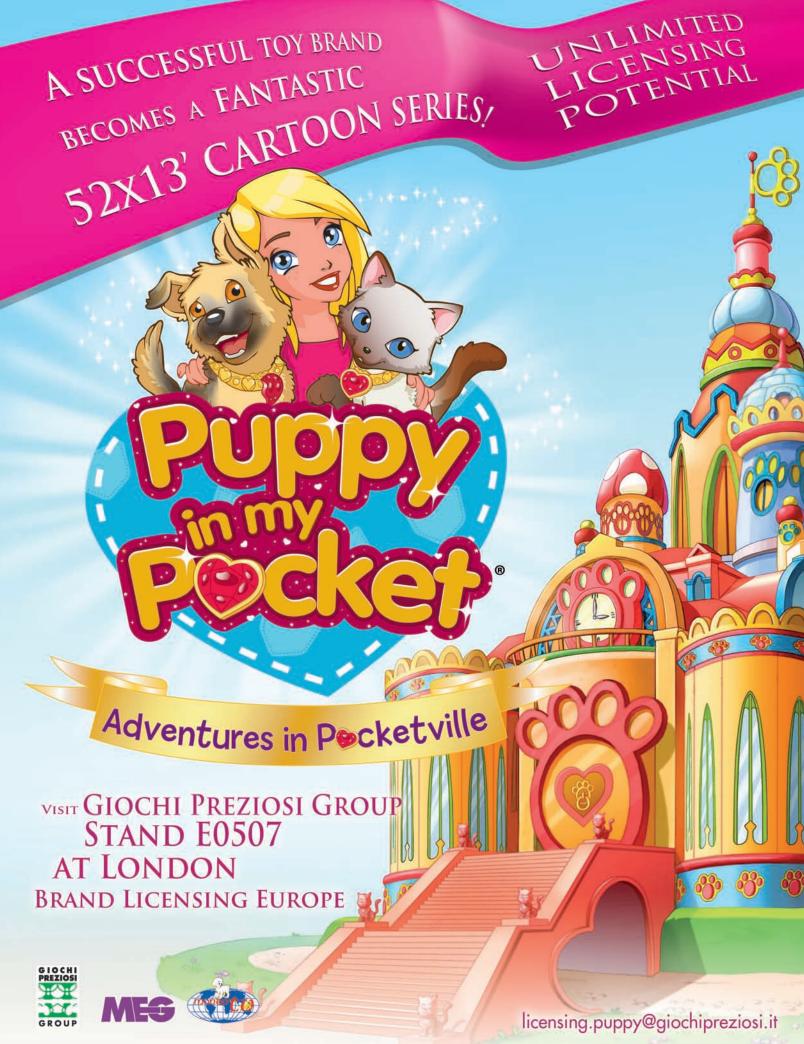


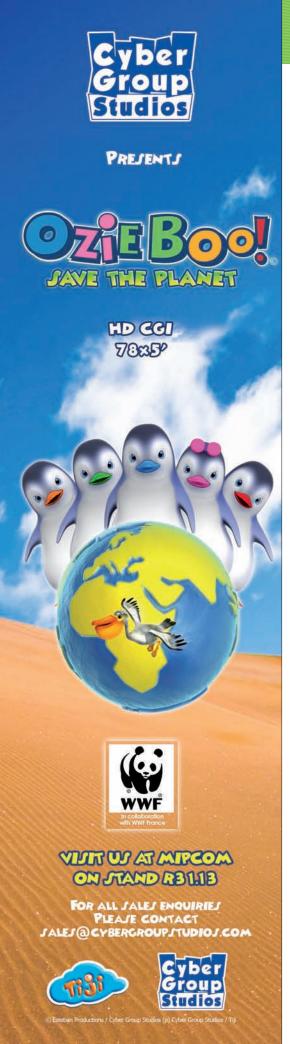
By April of this year, Domo-branded goods were generating roughly 30% of WeeWorld's branded sales. A dedicated Domo shop soon followed on the site. Both sides, however, are quick to point out that Domo virtual goods' success was driven by the use of real-world marketing and promotional techniques—essentially Big Tent got the world out and helped push consumers to WeeWorld and the virtual products.

"We let our fan community know," says Maryyanek, adding that Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were all employed in concert to promote the Domo goods and WeeWorld itself.

WeeWorld seems to be a particularly good platform for branded virtual goods aimed at the teen audience, says Welch. Zeroing in on the 13 to 17 demo, whose members are hungry for digital representations of non-digital brands, Welch says WeeWorld users are actually reaching out and requesting the inclusion of their favorite entertainment and consumer brands at the site. "I wake up every day with an email box full of people saying 'When am I going to get this brand on your site,"" she says.







"They want their real-world brands to be available. These kids are actually asking for them."

The simpatico relationship between WeeWorld and Big Tent is not necessarily the rule in the emerging virtual goods space. Take for example Sulake, the privately held company that owns international virtual world Habbo. The site generated US\$20 million in revenue in Q1 this year, 90% of which came from micro-transactions for virtual goods. Currently, Habbo has no licensed products.

Although he gets a flood of phone calls from IP owners, Sulake EVP of business development and communications Teemu Huuhtanen says he's reluctant to deal in licensed goods until IP owners gain a better grasp of the economies of virtual worlds.

"IP holders are asking for way too much," says Huuhtanen bluntly. "They are thinking about 50/50 deals, but I think they should be getting more like 8% to 20%." And although Habbo Hotel has had successful promotional campaigns over the past 18 months where virtual goods based on American Idol and Twilight were available at the site, he says those deals worked because it was a two-way street with the licensors.

"Both of those campaigns were really good for us," Huuhtanen says. "It wasn't just about money—they brought exposure and engagement to our site and their brands, and that was the important thing."

Huuhtanen adds he is reticent to bolster Habbo's branded virtual goods offerings because he's not sure the licensed goods will outsell the generic ones by a big enough margin to mitigate the added cost.

"A lot of times, it just won't generate enough additional sales to justify the royalties," Huuhtanen says. "There is a lot of money floating around this business and everyone is trying to understand the best way to capture it. I'm sure after all the experimenting going on, the industry will figure out how to make it work for everyone."

Ravi Mehta, co-author of *Branded Virtual Goods Market Report* and VP of products for virtual world consultant Viximo, agrees a lot of work is still required to get licensors and virtual world owners on the same page.

"There is just not a standard yet," Mehta says. "The virtual world and game

developers are really reluctant to pay upfront fees, "There is not a drive to do it in a lot of cases because the margins are so good on the generic items." However, he says there are still great opportunities for IP owners—particularly purveyors of kids properties—in the space, as long as deals are done in a prudent and thoughtful manner.

"Kids are always ahead of the curve," Metha notes. "They love their IP and interacting with it." He points to Disney's purchase of social game developer Playdom for more than US\$700 million

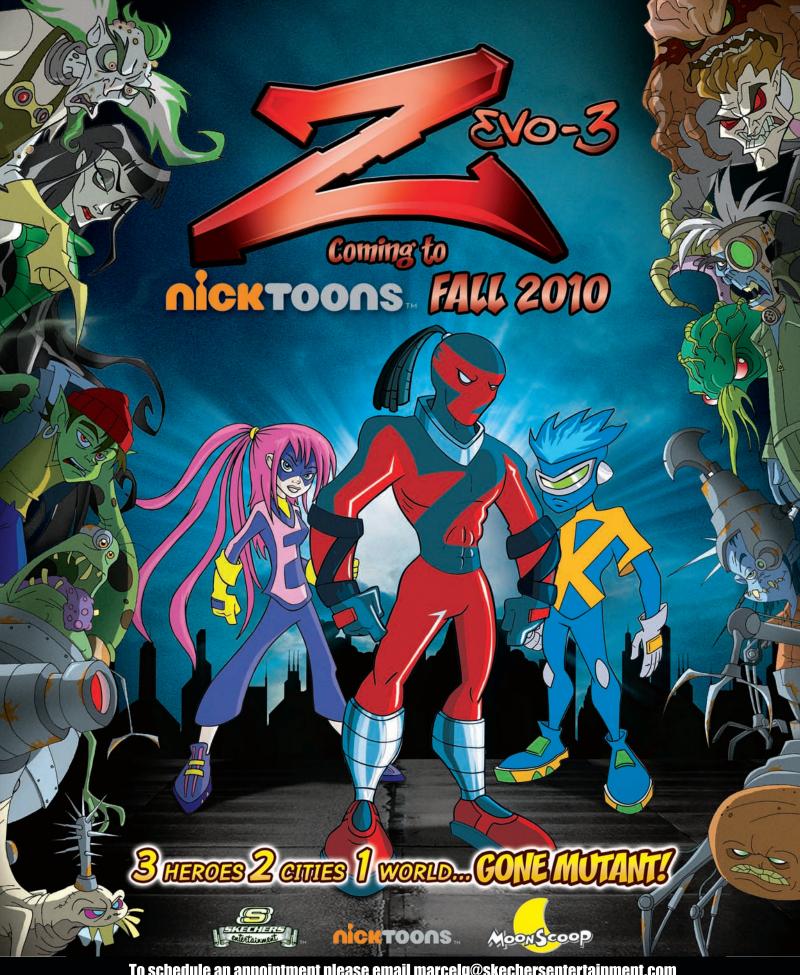


Habbo was pleased with its Twilight tie-in, but isn't keen on the revenue expectations of most IP owners

in July as recent proof that kids are a major force in the space.

"There are really big opportunities for the brands and IP owners," he says. "The big question is finding the right places and business structure, and being patient. The whole industry is growing really quickly and it's still in the very early stages."

Big Tent Entertainment >	www.bigtent.tv
Habbo >	www.habbohotel.com
Virtual Greats >	www.virtualgreats.com
Viximo >	www.viximo.com
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Strange days for Gator's Emily program

year into handling the Emily the Strange licensing program for its creator Rob Reger and his company Cosmic Debris, L.A.-based licensing agent Gator Group is taking the niche teen/tween girls IP to the mainstream with a new music deal.

The freshly inked contract with EMI's Virgin Records will result in an entire album of original Emily the Strange music hitting retail shelves and online music platforms in 2011.

"From her beginning 15 years ago, Emily has always been associated with music," says Jennifer Sullivan, VP of global account management at Gator Group, explaining why the deal was a natural for the IP. "We aren't calling it 'indie rock' or 'alternative,' we are calling it 'Strange Music.' We are hoping that she will create an entire new genre of music."

While Emily's backup band has yet to be named, Sullivan says many big names in the industry have already approached the project managers.

"Virgin represents [Damon Albarn's] Gorillaz, the most successful virtual group of all time," says Sullivan. "It saw the potential with Emily."

The new deal comes on the heels of a long list of partnerships that Gator has inked for the IP since starting to work with it about 12 months ago. So far more than 22 licensees have been signed for both North American and international territories in categories including apparel, comic books, accessories and toys and games. And the Gator Group has proven that the property, which emerged from a design on a skateboard, is just starting to hit its stride.

"Emily's really about individuality. It's the sort of geek chic that really hits upon the idea of empowerment and rebelliousness," Sullivan says. She adds that the



property's fan website has been around for almost a decade and still pulls in about one million unique visitors a month.

The next stage of development is rumored to be a feature film, although nothing is official yet. However, Reger revealed at Comic-Con San Diego that Emily would be making her feature film debut in a liveaction film from Universal Pictures, produced by Dark Horse Entertainment.

"Emily's adventure will continue," hints Sullivan. "We expect 2011 to be a big year." **GR**

Emily the Strange > www.emilythestrange.com
Gator Group > www.gatorgroup.com





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Penguin taking a bite out of the licensing biz

With the aim of moving out of the bookstore, publishing stalwart Penguin has been hitting the licensing trail in search of partners to take its IPs in brandnew directions. "We have been doing a little bit of a toe test," says Lori Burke, director of licensing for New York-based Penguin Young Readers Group. "We have been looking across our various imprints where we have merchandising rights and are diversifying our catalogue."

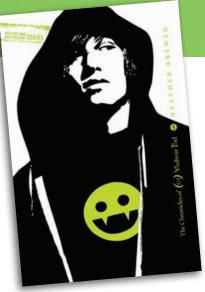
While the company combs through its archives for publishing brands that continue to entertain kids, it has focused its newly hatched licensing efforts on two IP. It's shopping bestselling book series The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod and Vampire Academy around to potential licensees.

While not on the same sales level as the Twilight saga, which kick-started the current bout of vampire love, The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod has found a devoted audience in tween boys. The five-book series by Heather Brewer tells the tale of a vampire as he moves his way through the ranks of high school, starting with Eight Grade Bites and ending at Twelfth Grade Kills.

Vampire Academy, meanwhile, skirts Edward/Bella territory, at least in terms of audience. The six-book series shares the same female teen/young adult demo, but focuses on an epic battle being waged to destroy evil vampires. Both IP mine the popular trend of teen Goth horror and Burke says fan demand pushed them to the forefront of licensing plans.

"It got to the point where we would go to a [book] signing and have a staffer wearing a promo t-shirt that we created and kids would ask 'Can I buy that?" Burke says. "We would make posters and buttons and the stores would run out—at that point we knew we wanted to learn a little more about licensing."

Penguin has had an arm's length relationship with licensing for some time, but seeing the demand for its newer IP prompted the company to dive into the fray. And



Penguin's banking on The Chronicles of Vladimir Tod's vampire heat to attract licensees

it put the message out loud and clear at this year's Licensing Show in Las Vegas and San Diego Comic-Con—Penguin is interested in growing multi-tiered merch programs.

"Folks don't normally look at the publishing industry as a source of licensable content," Burke says. "They were excited to see Penguin being proactive about licensing and coming to the table with new and diverse strategies."

While the initial plan was to ink deals before the end of the year and have products hit shelves for fall 2011, the reaction in the marketplace has been so good that some initial SKUs might be ready a year early. "We are shifting our timing a bit," says Burke. "We should be able to announce some partnerships shortly."

Out of the gate, Burke expects the two vampy properties to work well in the online gaming sphere as well as traditional softline categories like apparel and accessories.

"Our planning has to be really far out," says Burke. "We have to coordinate with our publishing program and make sure our new licensees have enough time to pull together a program." To that end, Burke is now putting her efforts into building relationships with retailers that will allow Penguin to create coordinated promotions showcasing the various extensions of its IP.

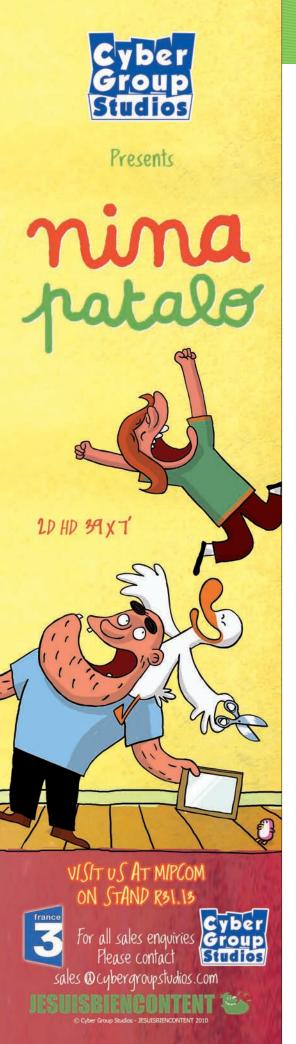
"We do want to empower our licensees to do their own marketing, but as a licensor we want to create some key tent poles at retail," says Burke. "That is our focus now." **GR**

LINKS

Penguin Group

www.penguin.com





Spin Master springs into the mini-doll market

Toronto, Canada-based toyco Spin Master is hoping for lightning to strike again at retail—this time in the mini-doll aisle with a new collectible aimed at girls ages four to nine. The three-inch-tall Zoobles, as they've been dubbed, utilize the same technology that helped the company's blockbuster boys brand Bakugan literally spring to life.

"They have a pop-open function," says Cristy Collins, marketing director for Spin Master's girls division. "So, out of the ball comes a cute, friendly character."

When stroked, the Zoobles react by blinking their eyes, wiggling their ears and wagging their tails. And they have a collectible aspect that Spin Master believes will capture the targeted demo in the same way Bakugan beguiled boys. There is no specific trading game attached as the play pattern relies on girls wanting to bring home the initial reasonably priced 150 characters (US\$5.99 each) and their corresponding playsets and accessories, which max out at US\$29.99 apiece.

Using the same tech that made Bakugan pop, Zoobles are aiming to make inroads in the girls market

Launched in North America and Australia last month, Zoobles' international rollout is expected in spring 2011. State-side, Spin Master has secured high-profile spots in the fall print circulars, as well as endcaps in featured areas belonging to major chains including Walmart and Toys 'R' Us.

And in the long term, look for Spin Master's US licensing agent Cartoon Network Enterprises to explore outbound licensing opportunities for the brand, starting with a promotional partnership with a major restaurant chain in spring 2011. **GR**

Spin Master > www.spinmaster.com
Zoobles > www.zoobles.com

New online database looks to match retailers with kids products

picture US dating site Match.com but with retailers and manufacturers trying to make a love connection. That's the way ShopSight CEO Alvin All describes his new website that he hopes will revolutionize the way that retailers stock their shelves.

"We are starting out by connecting small toy manufacturers to retailers and hopefully they will get their products into places they have never been before," says All.

ShopSight invites manufacturers to pay an annual product listing fee (US\$199 for two SKUs and up to US\$1,000 for an unlimited number). Retailers, for their part, are encouraged to sign up for a free membership and browse the database for products that might fit into their planograms.

"We see retailers branching out of their standard core products," says All. "This means that retailers need to redefine the products that they are selling and expand into product lines that they may not have considered in the past."

All, a co-founder and CEO of iParenting Media, an Evanston, Illinois-based company purchased by the Walt Disney Corporation in 2007, found that his expertise and contacts in the family sphere made kids-related products and retailers a logical place to start. Accordingly, ShopSight's first area of focus is on manufacturers of baby and juvenile products, toys, video games and other family-friendly goods.

With the tagline Sell More, Buy Better, All reports that the site has received positive feedback from users. Currently, the roster is small, with roughly 50 manufacturers and a few hundred retailers registered for the service, but he expects those numbers to grow over the next few months. **GR**

LINKS

ShopSight

www.shopsight.com





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Paper Jamz's hands-on promotion

ong Kong-based WowWee is betting big that its line of paper-thin instruments will be the must-have item for Christmas 2010. Backed by a budget of upwards of US\$10 million, the privately owned toyco has pulled together an innovative and creative marketing plan, designed to make sure kids get the hands-on Paper Jamz instrument experience.

"The second people get their hands on it, they want it," says WowWee CMO Marc Rosenberg, explaining the approach.

The line of pseudo instruments, which is aimed at kids ages eight and up, includes a guitar that weighs just eight ounces and is less than 1.25 inches thick. Powered by new Active Graphics Technology, users can strum it like a real guitar. Both the guitar and drum set have an SRP of US\$24.99, and the accompanying amp will retail for US\$14.99. Each item comes with a selection of preprogrammed songs with which the user can play along.

Over the next few weeks, WowWee and US retail partners including Walgreens, Toys 'R' Us and Walmart will be setting up thousands of in-store displays that will allow kids to try out the tactile toys.

"Display-wise we are looking at 12,000 to 13,000 'try-me' units," says Rosenberg, adding that WowWee has partnered with battery company Rayovac to perform weekly checks and make sure that each display stays in working order. "If a display doesn't work it can be really damaging," he says. "So we are going to make sure they are always in tip-top shape."

Rosenberg adds that the displays will be tailored for the different retail environments. "The challenge has been in making sure each retailer has its own concept, its own voice," says Rosenberg. "They have all stepped up so it's important to create unique opportunities."

The Paper Jamz line of affordable and easy-to-master instruments rolls into mass retail this fall along with a big marketing push

Besides the in-store displays, WowWee has inked promotional partnerships with such heavyweights as the WWE, Cartoon Network, Disney XD and the American Idol Summer Tour. The WWE will play a prominent role in the TV spots, which should start to roll out in the early fall, and Paper Jamz will also be a major sponsor of the music-based CN series *Total Drama World Tour*.

"The dollars we are spending, the way we have been able to extend those dollars through promotional partnerships, and the support of retail we have enjoyed, show you how excited people are about this product," says Rosenberg.

Another marketing avenue that WowWee will be looking to explore is user-generated content. While Paper Jamz is currently available in the UK and Australia, already some 80 odd videos featuring the product have already popped up on YouTube. It's an area WowWee will be looking to explore further as the line rolls into the North American market.

"Right now we are working on things for the spring," says Rosenberg. "Perhaps a full Paper Jamz tour will be a reality—for us it's really a multi-year opportunity." **GR**

LINKS

WowWee >

www.wowwee.com

"Brand Licensing preview" continued from page 39



Already on-board is EMI Worldwide as the property's music partner, and Beel says that with tunes playing such a big role in the series, she is looking for partners that can explore the musical aspect of the property. Additionally, since Rastamouse is based on a publishing program, DHX will be looking to expand that category and partner up with toycos. "Toys and publishing will be our core categories," she says. "In the UK, obviously plush will also be right there as well—figurines could really fit this program, too."

There's a new kitty on the block

Making its first appearance at this year's event is design-led brand Pip the Cat from UK-based Over the Moon Design. Starting out as a greeting card line 18 months ago, the cute feline characters are now available on stationery in more than 500 high street outlets that's also popular on UK-based online retailer Moonpig.com. The cards have also hit international retailers in France, Germany, Finland, Italy, Switzerland and Australia.

With licensing agent KJG working on its behalf, Over the Moon is now looking to extend the brand to other categories that appeal to both core kids and tween/teen markets. "We

> are looking to capitalize on Pip's ongoing success, and given the amount of interest the brand has been generating, I'm sure that we will be very busy at the show," says Kirsty Guthrie, MD of KJG. On the roster so far is Bluebird Brands, which has signed up to create Pip mugs, coasters, purses, wallets and umbrellas aimed at tweens and teens. UK-based Shreds is also targeting girls with a range of aprons, tote bags and lunchbags.

KJG will be using the show to look for further opportunities in a number of different categories, including plush and apparel.

Targeting tweens and teens, Pip the Cat is looking to migrate from stationery to apparel and accessories

Preschool pachyderm promotes safety

Bumbling elephant Hari is the center of brand-new preschool IP Hari's World, the creation of fatherand-son team Tristan-Sean and Tristan-Paul McGee. The IP makes its licensing debut on the back of a publishing program that has supported two releases at UK book chain Waterstone's.

The plush license for the territory has been snapped up by Dowman Soft Touch, which has developed product based on the six characters from the books, with a line of

finger and hand puppets

A father-and-son team hatched publishing IP Hari's World

about to follow. The higher-end range is set to go on sale this fall at boutique shops and department stores in the UK. An additional eight books have been planned that will see the introduction of two new characters to keep momentum going. And since the books carry a subtle safety message, the McGees will be looking to explore avenues outside of the

traditional licensing categories like child safety products, including bicycle helmets and sunscreen.

"The brand is proving very popular amongst children, while parents are attracted to the safety elements of the stories," says Tristan-Sean McGee, MD of Hari's World. "Having Dowman Soft Touch on-board is a fantastic start and we look forward to taking full advantage of the three-day show."



Fremantle focuses on boys action

After launching its Children and Family Entertainment division late last year, Fremantle Media is putting a big push behind brandnew 52 x half-hour boys action series Monsuno. And FM Enterprises is managing worldwide distribution and licensing rights (except Asia) for the TV series being co-produced by Dentsu, FM and Jakks Pacific that focuses on the re-awakening of monsters on

Earth. With master toy partner Jakks Pacific already on-board, look for FME to be tracking other licensing avenues, including apparel, accessories and promotional partnerships.

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BAESTARTS





ast issue's Kaleidoscope explored how kids and teens spend their summers. We uncovered their thoughts—the good and bad—about summertime and took a peek into their daily routines. For part two, we're diving deeper into how busy kids are feeling during the summer months and what activities shape those feelings. Finally, we'll explore summer boredom and how it differs by age and gender.

We reported that kids and teens feel they have more free time in the summer compared to other parts of the year. While true, kids still feel they're busy. On a scale of one to five, where one is "not busy at all" and five is "very busy," respondents on average rated themselves about a three. This number often reached a four or five respondents approached their teen years. (Interestingly, not one kid we spoke with rated themselves below a two on the scale.)

For kids, participating in camps, playing outside, bike riding and playing with friends in the neighborhood contributed to their busyness. Teens, meanwhile, classify organized sports, sports camps, jobs and chores as activities that fill their summer days. As such, "busy" is interpreted differently among kids and teens. And though it could be argued certain activities such as playing don't constitute busy work, the fact remains that our respondents are feeling busy. It's possible this is a product of living full or scheduled lifestyles all year long, therefore maintaining this sense of busyness throughout the summer months.

On the flipside, we asked kids and teens about boredom and if and when it occurs. Younger kids don't necessarily feel bored often, but when they do, they turn to indoor activities such as watching TV or playing video games to pass the time. Just as the kids, teens don't feel bored often either. The teen boys we spoke with seldom experience boredom—rather they defined it as "downtime" and "relaxation." Given their scheduled summer days, it's no wonder teen boys welcome "downtime."

The clear outliers are tweens and younger teen girls. These groups find themselves living in some very boring times during the summer. Tweens have entered into the onset of adolescence, often leading them to feel "sleepy" and "lazy." These in-between years are also tricky because these groups feel they're sometimes too old to play outside and too young to go off on their own and they often rely on a parent to help them get from place to place. Girls also struggle to maintain their social connections during the summer. (Knowing how important being social is to girls at this age, it's no surprise they're feeling lonely without constant daily contact from their friends.)

So how do kids feel as the summer comes to an end? Younger kids don't look forward to the close of summer as they truly enjoy all that the season has to offer. Teens tend to get somewhat anxious at the idea of summer coming to an end. They're aware of the increase in school work, keeping up with sports or after-school activity schedules, and preparation for college that awaits them. It also should come as no surprise that tweens, especially girls, are ready for the summer to be over—they can't wait to resume socializing at school. **18**

In the next Kaleidoscope, we'll explore video gaming among kids, teens and parents. For more information, contact Kaleidoscope@nick.com

(Source: Nickelodeon Kids and Family Research, June, 2010; Touchstone Research. Quantitative Sample Size: N=500 kids and teens ages eight to 17 years old.)

In an effort to keep you in touch with our audience and give a voice to our consumers, the Brand and Consumer Insights Department at Nickelodeon Kids & Family has created Nickelodeon Kaleidoscope. Every month, Kaleidoscope will capture key areas of interest across the kid and family cultural landscape, provide an understanding of attitudes and behaviors, and report on trends and buzz.

When Matsu Bashō (1644-1694) wrote

"an idea can turn from dust to magic, depending upon the talent that rubs against it"

he was obviously thinking about his next children's app.

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Ready to capture some digital magic? Find out why Dust or Magic has become such a mecca for top designers, editors and researchers, as they demo-their-way through the turbulent year of children's interactive media, while enjoying good food, wine and friendship. Participants

openly debate the KAPi Prize nominees, a high stakes award given each year at CES in January, determined by vote.

When November 7-9, 2010 (Sunday mid-PM, through Tuesday) Where The Inn at Lambertville Station, New Jersey USA (1.5)

hours from Newark Liberty Airport). Participants stay at the same inn.

Costs Tuition is \$1480 for one seat, \$990 for 2-5. Seats are limited to 60, on a first come, first served basis. Dust or Magic has sold out every year, so don't delay!



Register online at www.dustormagic.com or call 800-993-9499 (9-3 EST). If you can't make it this year, you can submit your product (see http://childrenstech.com/kapis) or send 60 copies of literature, to Dust or Magic, 120 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822. Items generally cannot be returned; please call if you have questions.



Who's coming this year?

2010 speakers include Kathleen Alfono, Director of Play Labs, Fisher-Price; Daren Carstens, Carstens' Studios; Barbara Chamberlin, Learning Games Lab, NMSU; Mandeep Singh Dhillon, CEO, Togetherville; Caroline Hu Flexer, Duck Duck



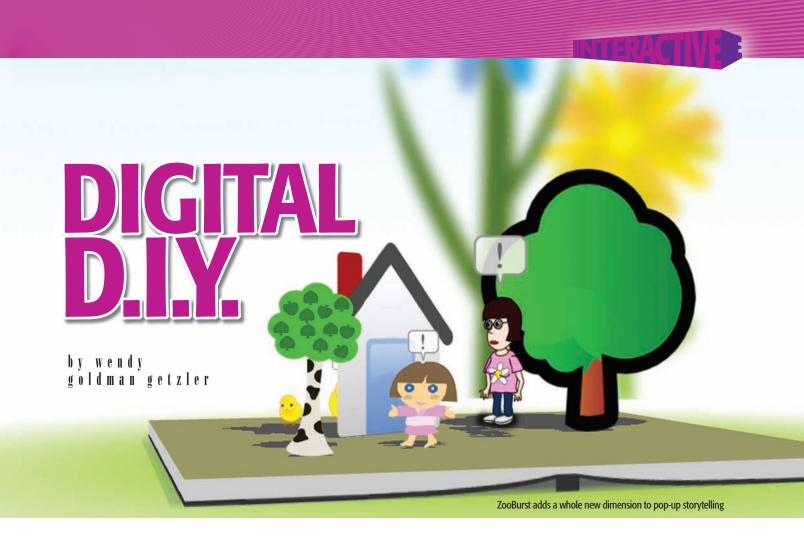
Moose; Claire Green, President, Parents' Choice Foundation; David Kleeman, President, American Center for Children and Media; Jim Marggraff, CEO, Livescribe; Ann McCormick, Founder, The Learning Company; Lane Merrifield, Executive VP, Disney &



Co-Founder and GM, Club Penguin; Robin Raskin, Living in Digital Times; Jesse Schell, Professor, Carnegie Mellon University and CEO, Schell Games; Bill Shribman, Executive Producer, WGBH; Mark Schlichting, Creator, The Living Books; Scott Traylor, President and Founder, 360KID. Michael Colombo (NYU

ITP) and Traci Lawson (Columbia TC) will be producing the demos. Dust or Magic was created by Children's Technology Review.





and small are handing creative control over to crafty kids

dmittedly, virtual worlds have been tapping into kids' desires to customize their play through individual avatars and virtual abodes à la Club Penguin for the past few years, but the rules of the game are changing. At increasingly younger ages, kids are creating their own digital stories, tapping out a vocabulary of 35,000 words and fashioning video game experiences. And a growing number of digital platforms are lining up to let kids

control content and use their imaginations in whole new ways.

"The big buzzword right now is digital storytelling," says Craig Kapp, founder of New Jersey-based ZooBurst. The web-based tool of the same name allows visitors to create their own library of 3-D pop-up books. "Hundreds (of products) are letting kids take creative control on content, but limitations are there. It's really empowering to let them have free reign over the environment."

So how does it give kids the license to create? ZooBurst fuses new media with cutting-edge proprietary technology, giving children access to 12,000 clip art images that they can arrange to create a pop-up book. They can also outline specifications (like how far an image will "pop") and install additional features such as chat bubbles. Kapp insists most children can build a book within 10 minutes. His data also shows that the majority of ZooBurst site visitors, ranging primarily between five and 10

years old, spend roughly 4.5 minutes reading and interacting with their newly created stories per session.

"Kids can write their own stories, decide how the characters act and where they're placed. There's very little pre-made content. It's all up to the kids to express themselves," says Kapp. (He developed ZooBurst with two colleagues over the course of eight months while doing post-grad work at New York University.)

What really sets ZooBurst apart from other digital storytelling tools is its augmented reality feature, which allows kids to view their newly created content in 3-D mode. With a webcam and Flash-based technology, kids can view their books through a virtual mirror and use gestures to flip pages thanks to ZooBurst's motion-based algorithm that allows users to engage with the books without needing to touch the keyboard.

Drawing on the product's literary bent and Kapp's work in educational technology, ZooBurst has gained traction with US educators. Since its April 14 debut, more than 3,500 teachers from around the world have signed up for what is now a free model, with the largest demand coming from the US, Australian, New Zealand and UK markets. Kapp anticipates that the subscription fee, being introduced this month, will be less than US\$120 per year. Varying subscription models will emerge with the addition of new features, such as giving kids the capability to voice their books' characters.

Also thinking outside the box, quite literally, is Disney Interactive Studios with *Toy Story* 3, which launched on Sony, Nintendo and Microsoft consoles in June. The latest title based on the Toy Story





Toy Story 3's Toy Box mode mirrors an open-sandbox style of play, putting kids in control of the playthings and their subsequent adventures

franchise allows kids to play in a new Toy Box mode—a customizable world where buildings, characters and environments are created by the player. Targeting children's imaginations and a wider audience, *Toy Story 3* marks a first for Disney Interactive in that game play isn't focused on completing levels and is more about finding different ways to express individuality and creativity. "The appeal is that you can play with Andy's toys however you want," says Ashley Bernatt, marketing manager for Disney Interactive Studios Canada. "Each child has a different experience with them."

The game gives players the option to either move through the linear story or create a new adventure using the same characters and environments. In this way, *Toy Story* 3 simulates an open-sandbox environment where the toys made popular from the films are malleable and users complete missions in order to earn rewards.

From a marketing standpoint, the title takes the Toy Story franchise out of its traditional media boundaries and allows viewers to engage with the characters and tailor content to meet their specific interests. "This [concept] is definitely something Disney will continue to do if this sticks," says Bernatt.

Already preceding Disney into the threshold of customizable gaming experiences is Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment with its growing Scribblenauts franchise that directly taps into gamers' creative imaginations and vocabularies. The first *Scribblenauts* Nintendo DS game, which launched in 2009, allows users to randomly enter words that are then turned into digital objects on-screen. So revolutionary was the product, that it made history last year as the first portable game ever to win an E3 Best of Show Award.

Taking things one step further is *Super Scribblenauts*, WBIE's newest title for the brand. The sequel to the initial title, which became the best-selling third-party Nintendo DS title in North America, is set to launch in October. This iteration adds a lineup of 10,000 adjectives to the original's library of 35,000 nouns—all of which are accessed via WBIE's Objectnaut recognition tool.

"User-created worlds and experiences are definitely getting bigger," says Jeremiah Slaczka, a developer at Bellevue,

Washington—based 5TH Cell and the creator of *Super Scribblenauts*. "Everyone has an imagination, so we figured let's make a game that everyone can play."

Developers like Slaczka are welcoming the challenge of creating a new model upon which players add seemingly limitless content. He and his team of roughly 40 people spent nearly a year getting the vocabulary in place and developing the Objectnaut tool, a proprietary hierarchical system that uses association to categorize and recognize objects. Any word entered into the game that relates to wood, for instance, can then be virtually burned by players.

That ability to associate and create objects is part of what makes customizable content so appealing to kids. According to Gary Pope, director of UK-based family market consulting firm Kids Industries, children ordinarily don't have a great deal of power so they want to leverage any control afforded to them. Pope, a former school teacher who has made it his business to understand the kids entertainment industry through a developmental lens, says the personalization of characters and products—be it on an iPad, online or video game—meets with the ego-centric needs at the core of early childhood development. And it's healthy.

"Customizable content stands at a loose boundary between TV and active play, since open-ended play evokes that same level of imagination," Pope says. He also notes kids are more inclined to create and eat up bite-sized content, similar to the four-minute pop-up book viewing experience they get on ZooBurst.

Still, Pope insists that even in an open-ended play model children need parameters, which can be invoked through simple guidelines on a screen or other elements that allow kids to follow the creator's universe but move along at their own speed.

The ultimate outcome of allowing kids to create their own con-

tent and gaming experiences will make them more selective about the media they consume down the road, contends Pope. "This is just another evolutionary step in the world of kids media."

LINKS	
5TH Cell >	www.5thcell.com
Disney Interactive >	disney.go.com/disneyinteractivestudios
Kids Industries >	www.kidsindustries.com
Warner Bros. Interactive >	www.wbie.com
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- #7 A BIGGER and BETTER celebration for our winners.

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- #Z Our judges are top-notch.

We're recruiting the best of the best to give your entries the careful and qualified professional consideration they deserve. Here are just a few of the folks who are on-board already for our first round of judging:

- Carla de Jong (Head of Commissioning, ABC Kids)
- Leah Hoyer (Former Director of Development, Walt Disney Television Animation)
- Lenora Hume (Former EVP of Production & Programming, HIT Entertainment)
- Joan Lofts (Former Director of Television, Contender Entertainment Group)
- Lou Fazio (VP of Scheduling, Acquisitions & Planning, The Hub)
- Brenda Nietupski (Former Director of Programming, Treehouse TV)
- Alan Gregg (Director of Original Content, Teletoon Canada)
- Amy Friedman (Former SVP of Original Programming, TeenNick)
- Lisbeth Mathieson (Former Children's Acquisitions Chief, TV2 Denmark)
- **We're truly global, and eligibility is a cinch.**Your program only has to have aired one time-anywhere in the world-in the last year.
- ***5** You'll be in great company if you win.

Last year's awards went to companies including Sesame Workshop, The Jim Henson Company, Scholastic Media, Starz Media, BBC Children's, Fresh TV and The Cookie Jar Company. And we'll be hosting a celebratory lunch at KidScreen Summit for all of our winners—past and present.

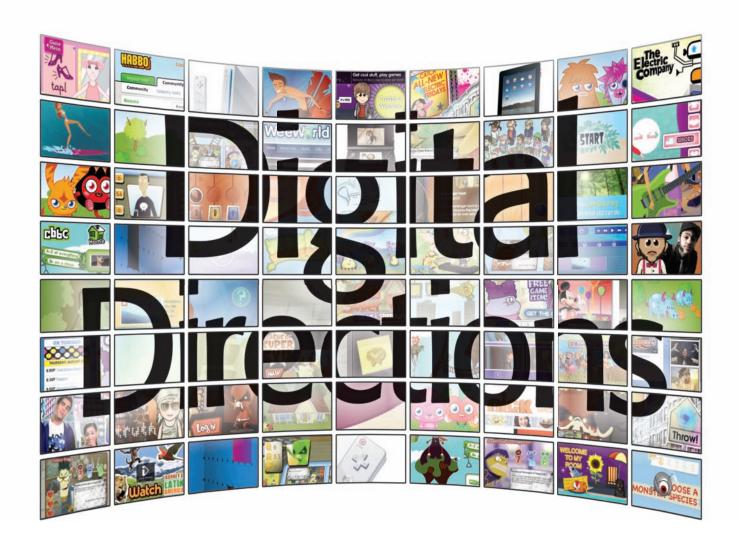
BOTTOM LINE...

If you're looking for an opportunity to get your work recognized in a truly meaningful way, KidScreen Awards is a perfect fit.

ENTRY DEADLINE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2010

WHO SALP COEXISTING WOULD BE EASY?







- The ins and outs of partnering up with third-party digital experts 84
- Eight reasons why kids TV producers should forget the pixel panic 94



ike many content-driven companies, HIT Entertainment has been beefing up digital extensions of its core brands to stay ahead of the curve. This past spring, with the help of third-party digital firms, HIT redesigned its Thomas & Friends and Angelina Ballerina websites and introduced iPhone/iTouch apps for both properties. The Angelina site in particular now boasts augmented reality technology through which young fans can record themselves dancing and singing alongside their favorite ballerina and then save and send the videos to friends and family. As well, registered site members get a user profile and their own dressing room that can be personalized with customizable content from the site, including their saved game scores and favorite videos. The site also includes a music player with singalong videos, Angelina games and printable coloring sheets.

SVP of global brand management and digital media Natasha Fishman says HIT's digital department oversees the company's digital

The ins and outs of teaming up with digital specialists for brand expansion

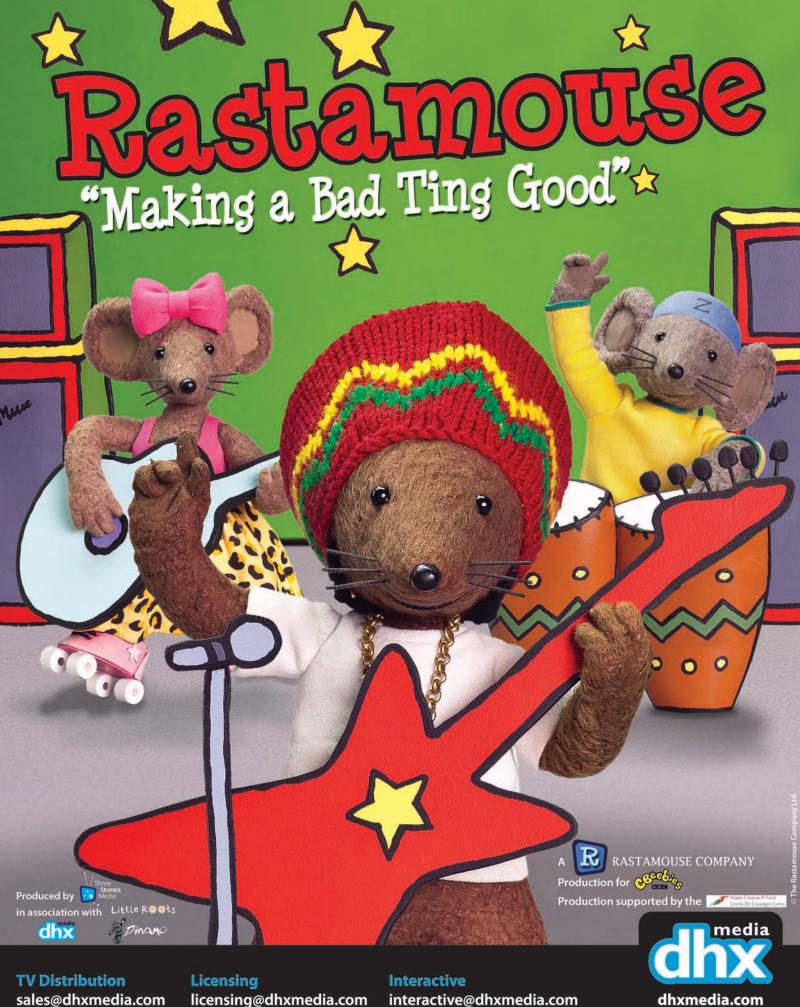
strategy and uses in-house creative producers in its US and UK offices to work on both site development and marketing initiatives. However, the company relies on partnering with external service providers to bring the digital know-how and execute strong multimedia projects based on its top-performing TV and publishing brands.

HIT's situation isn't unique in the kids TV space. Faced with the ever-growing competitive need to cultivate cutting-edge digital off-shoots of their content, producers are turning in increasing numbers to external experts. And in an attempt to distill the ingredients that combine to make a great digital recipe, we've talked to TV producers and broadcasters about how they evaluate potential third-party partners and work together to create cohesive cross-platform experiences.

Pairing up with the experts

"We don't look at it as farming things out, we look at it as a partnership," says HIT's Fishman. "We're looking for partners that are equally invested in the success and growth of the industry." For Thomas and Angelina's digital makeovers, Fishman issued an RFP (request for proprosal) and ended up landing New York-based web and mobile developer Mammalfish. Its sister company Whistlebox, meanwhile, brought its propriety webcam platform to the party to further augment the Angelina site. Finally, the company's mobile arm SmartFish was hired to create the iPhone apps.

What really sealed the deal for Mammalfish was the fact that it presented Fishman with a strategy that exceeded the RFP's specs. "Mammalfish came to us with a broader-reaching



strategy," says Fishman. "It integrated what came out of the initial proposal right into the redesign of the site."

"There's so much competition, and it's a matter of continuing to provide truly unique experiences in which not only are the kids having fun, but they're being challenged cognitively in a safe and COPPA-compliant environment," says Mammalfish president Michael LeFort. He adds that the Angelina Ballerina project is the most integrated approach the digital company has yet taken to a kids property.

"Our job as a technology provider is to say 'I've got this cool technology, let's come up with 20 ideas of how we can use it and then pick the four that would have the greatest impact," explains Whistlebox CTO Chas Mastin. "You realize that the brand is holy and you can't manipulate that. You just have to find creative ways to make it better."

The ability to create "deeply interactive extensions of TV programming" is what Toronto, Canada-based Xenophile Media brought to the table when it started work on the online content for Kudos Films and Television's

CBBC series M.I. High and FreshTV's Total Drama Island.

"We're discovering that the kids stuff is very rewarding as a producer because there's a strong pick-up on kids interactive extensions," says Xenophile executive producer Patrick Crowe. He says online extensions of adult shows tend to attract about 10% of their TV audience, whereas kid-focused online offerings, such as the M.I. High site, engage roughly 50% or more of a related TV show's viewership. For example, *Total Drama Island-Totally Interactive!*, available in 13



Preschool expert Sesame Workshop relied on an outside firm to reach kids six to nine with the Electric Company site





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languages in more than 30 countries, now has more than at least 10 million registered players. "It's integrated week by week with the story on TV and gives the viewers something meaningful after they've the watched the show, and it keeps them connected to the series," says Crowe.

Finding the right match

For the digital provider's part, gaining the trust of the producer and broadcaster comes from diligently answering RFPs and diving into early consultations, says Crowe. Partners need to get a sense of where the core property owners are coming from and what they want.

"Be familiar with the bible and respect its values," says Crowe. In fact, working closely with a bible on a brand concept is not a stretch, considering much of his staff has worked in TV production at some point. And as an interactive production company, Xenophile has its own writers, creatives and project managers to conceptualize, finance and produce experiences, as opposed to operating purely as a service entity. Besides experience in working with kids content, Crowe says it's

"You realize that the brand is holy and you can't manipulate that. You just have to find creative ways to make it better." -Chas Mastin, Whistlebox

important to look at what a company brings from a business point of view, in terms of financing know-how, as well as its all-important creative and technical expertise.

For Sesame Workshop, finding the right digital partner for *The Electric Company* was crucial. Though the company has long mastered creating educational content for the preschool set, *The Electric Company's* site, which launched last year, had to be attractive and relevant to kids ages six to nine. VP and EP of digital media Miles Ludwig explains that Sesame looked outside the box for a partner and then settled on a small New York-based boutique ad agency, WDDG, that had broad experience speaking to the target demo.

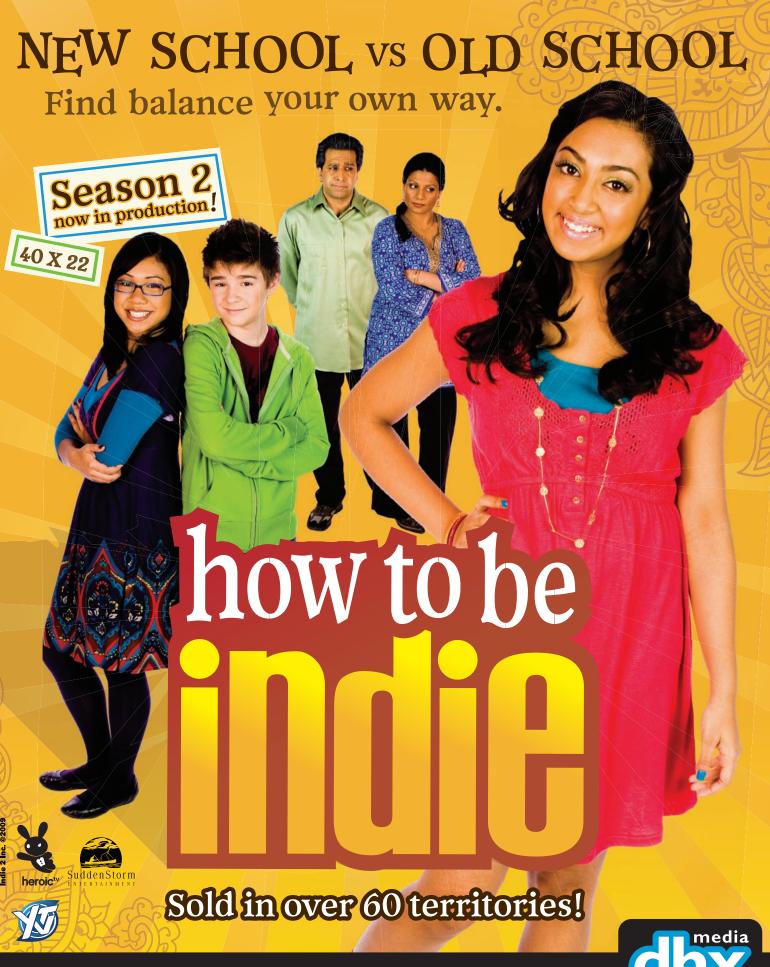
"We consciously listened to WDDG and followed its lead as far as what web content would be sticky for those kids," says Ludwig.

"And the company didn't have much experience in educational media, so we needed to be very clear and strong in that direction."

Sesame's digital arm, which Ludwig says employs roughly 40 people, is diligent about sending out RFPs for all jobs big or small to between five and 10 vendors, and aims to field at least three bids per project. He adds the department tries out new vendors on a regular basis and keeps rejected RFPs on file for future consideration.

Right now Ludwig is focused in on finding truly established transmedia partners. "We're working on making the connection between Sesame Street and other platforms closely bound," says Ludwig. Besides Sesame Wii and DS titles coming out this fall from licensee Warner Bros. Interactive, Ludwig is working on mobile initiatives for the IP and is thinking



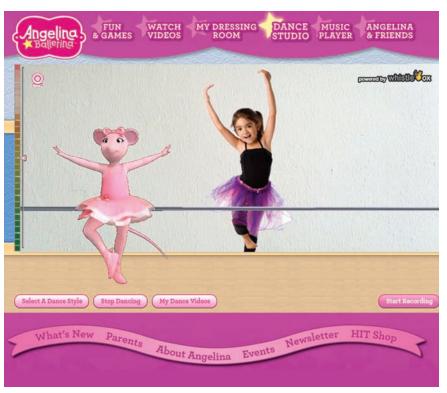


about the best way to capitalize on kids' current attraction to the iPad.

In-house advantages

Vancouver-based Nerd Corps president Ken Faier is also mapping out iPad plans for boys comic property League of Super Evil and is on the cusp of deciding whether to bring in a third party or develop the platform using the company's in-house expertise. *L.O.S.E.*, which bowed on CBBC and Canada's YTV in 2009 and now airs in 170 countries, rolled out its online offering in four phases, starting with a basic Flash-powered game-packed website.

Nerd Corps had worked successfully with Toronto-based digital firm Bitcasters on its boys action series *Storm Hawks*, but for *L.O.S.E.*'s online presence, Faier took a different route and grew the company's in-house interactive production team as it built up the website. The second phase included an avatar and "lair" creator with a game-point system for purchasing digital assets. Phase three introduced a multi-player, strategy-based trading card game. And phase four, which just came



HIT worked with augmented reality specialist Whistlebox to literally bring girls into the world of Angelina Ballerina





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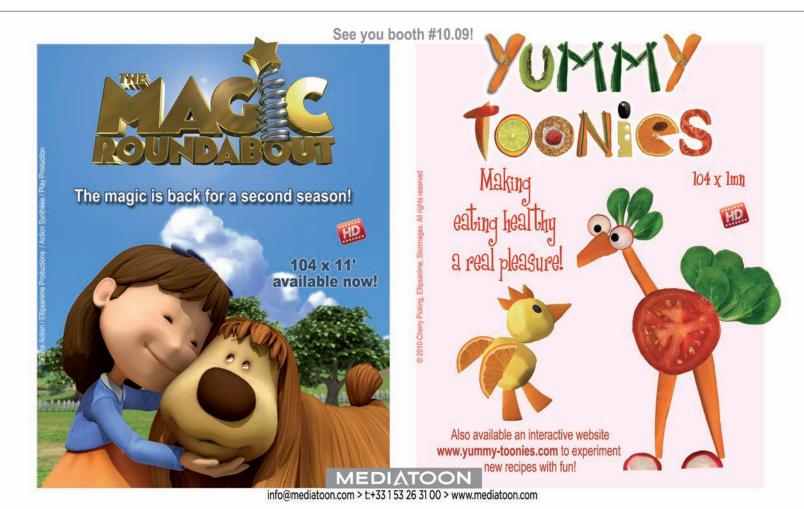


BBC Children's interactive department and Xenophile Media worked with prodco Kudos to create an immersive, interactive online component to run alongside spy-themed adventure series M.I. High

into open beta, includes communication forums where the series' boisterous characters serve as moderators and encourage game play. This summer the site monetized the trading card game and now accepts micro payments. Visitors can buy batches of points to purchase virtual accessories and accelerate game play. "So far, it's been about getting it stable and to a place where there's enough compelling content that they will want to buy points," says Faier.

Though Nerd Corps employs its own web/ game programmers, the iPad platform, which doesn't support Flash, opens up a whole new can of digital worms that might require getting its in-house team up to speed on Apple programming and/or bringing in a third party. "We want to break it down and see if it's worth being able to do it here," Faier says.

Having some of the interactive work done in-house, however, gives Nerd Corps an idea of exactly how modifications in the production of digital extensions affect the bottom line. "A certain feature might require more art and coders that could drive your budget up by



US\$400,000, for example—and if you don't have the expertise, you won't get that foresight," says Faier.

Broadcaster relations

From a broadcaster's perspective, getting channel-specific details ironed out on digital extensions/applications is an important part of a project's kick-off. And YTV's director of kids interactive Caitlin O'Donovan sets partner/producer guidelines at the very outset that detail how the digital will be delivered, hosted and operated. Some of the points O'Donovan covers are membership systems, video streaming requirements, user-generated content, and open chat and other community functions.

Overseeing the interactive of the kids group, which includes YTV, Treehouse and Nickelode-on Canada sites, as well as Nelvana Studios, O'Donovan says she's collaborated on and initiated interactive plans for IPs from all different angles. Besides producing standard web fare in-house, including websites, games and wall-papers, the interactive arm also refers TV producers to a roster of digital producers and sends out RFPs for service work on jobs like mobile applications and iApps. O'Donovan says the main criteria for selecting partners comes down to quality of work and ability to deliver on time.

"We'll talk to producers about the kinds of partners they might want to look at. If we're pitched properties that are huge in scope and vision, it's always exciting to start a project from that perspective," says O'Donovan.

Xenophile's Crowe says he's seen several instances where the impetus for the project comes directly from the broadcaster, rather than the producer. In the case of M.I. High, Crowe says BBC Children's interactive department drove the development of the online component that was hatched during a meeting with the broadcaster. He pitched the idea for an interactive online game with content that would weave in and out of the TV series and let kids participate in weekly missions with the series' teen spies. Xenophile worked with M.I. High's prodco Kudos to shoot new original footage of the cast during regular filming and then developed plot points and character crossovers with the online game. Crowe says Kudos also loaned Xenophile its producer and one of M.I.'s writers to review the online component's dialogue and make sure it matched the tone of the series.



Total Drama Island-Totally Interactive!, created by a third party and based on Fresh TV's Total Drama franchise, now boasts more than 10 million registered players in 30 territories

Crowe makes a point of staying on top of a broadcaster-led initiative as much as possible without stepping on toes. "You can't assume that broadcasters know what to do with the interactive product that you've just created," says Crowe. "So we're always happy to work closely with a broadcaster that has invested substantially in a property."

In terms of revenue models, Crowe says that Xenophile's work ranges from charging

we can put other places and use to promote the brand," says O'Donovan. Her department worked with Nerd Corps to develop L.O.S.E. Flash games that can be pulled out of the website and act as stand-alones on YTV.com. One game featured on the channel's Game Drop Wednesday online schedule ended up as a top-rated title for almost three months.

O'Donovan also pushes producers to work with their digital providers on a content plan

"Don't invest 80% of your budget into making a huge website; invest 80% into the content that we can put other places." -Caitlin O'Donovan, YTV

straight service fees to ownership in which it shares the interactive property's distribution revenues. "We're making an experience for viewers that provides unique content that broadcasters can license and bring to viewers from TV onto the online space," says Crowe.

It's all about the promo

When talking to producers about how their digital initiatives will jibe with the broadcaster's vision for a property, O'Donovan says she looks for elements that will drive visitors and engagement, such as video streams and game play. So the good news is broadcasters don't tend to look for massive virtual-world-type applications and often want companion digital content that can sit in the channel site's games section or social community area.

"Don't invest 80% of your budget into making a huge website; invest 80% into content that

to make sure kids come back regularly. For example, new Nelvana series *Beyblade: Metal Fusion* comes with 52 ready-to-go online content packs for broadcasters that pick up the series. An easy-to-use content management system accompanies the digital packs to make sure that even small channels can rotate the material and have something interesting on their Beyblade web pages every single week. "So often they launch the content and consider it done, but there needs to be a call to action to keep kids' attention and keep promoting the show," says O'Donovan. \stacksquare.

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Mammalfish >	www.mammalfish.com
Nerd Corps >	www.nerdcorps.com
Sesame Workshop >	www.sesameworkshop.org
Whistlebox >	www.whistlebox.com
Xenophile Media >	www.xenophile.ca
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Don't sweat the digital stuff

Eight reasons why kids TV producers should forgo pixel panic and embrace the interactive space

by jesse cleverly

work with many leading international producers developing IP-based strategies, and in a past life ran creative development for the BBC department charged with inventing storytelling in a post-linear digital age. Both BBC staff and the producers I now work with are immensely talented, creative and well-informed-they deliver excellence time and time again. However, these producers have varying opinions about their place in the digital ecosystem, both present and future. Some have bosses so terrified of new media they have to pretend to be certain about their digital plans to placate their superiors. Others exist in a state of what can only be deemed as enlightened confusion and are hesitant to wade into the fray.

After carrying out the process of strategic creative development on content meant to travel between traditional and non-traditional platforms for the past 12 years, it's since occurred to me that it might be useful to list some of the reasons I've identified for embracing the interactive realm and diving into digital for those still on the fence, or perhaps marked by trepidation.

A digital home's where the heart is

The other day I came downstairs to find my five-year-old trying to move the pictures around on the TV screen with her hands. She saw me and asked, "Dad, why is the TV broken?" With increasingly younger audiences being exposed to highly interactive screens everyday, children will come to automatically expect the engagement and interactivity that non-TV screens supply.

Moreover, a recent survey conducted by UK kid-focused market researcher Childwise examined the devices children own, the amount of time they spend using them and how much they care about them.



Moshi Monsters, with its 30 million registered kid users, is a great example of how a niche brand can work online

Not only did the number of hours spent interacting with mobile and PC screens combined outstrip those that children ages five to 10 spent with television, Childwise also found that only 18% of boys in that age group said they could not live without TV. Meanwhile, a full 57% of the boys declared computers/games consoles as their do-or-die devices. Notably, the numbers only get more decisive the older the children get.

When the Wright brothers invented the airplane, they asked railroad companies to help fund the development of this new form of transport. The companies in question rejected the brothers' pitch. To their

Function and form

detriment, they mistook their core business—moving things and people—for the technology they employed.

This moment in media evolution is akin to the transition from rail to air. Some producers will see that they have all the skills, experiences and contacts to make the jump, but others will mistake the platform they currently use for their core business—making screen-based entertainment.

Smart producers will use every opportunity they can to develop an understanding of the ways in which character development and storytelling skills can be applied to creating new formats to make the most of these emerging platforms and technologies.

From pages to places

Virtual worlds often evoke images of chatty, fuzzy avatars or shopping malls populated by surgically enhanced digital denizens, but as the online space evolves, it's transforming from "pages to places." In other words, online is recreating

experiences previously only provided by realworld places and the communities they house.

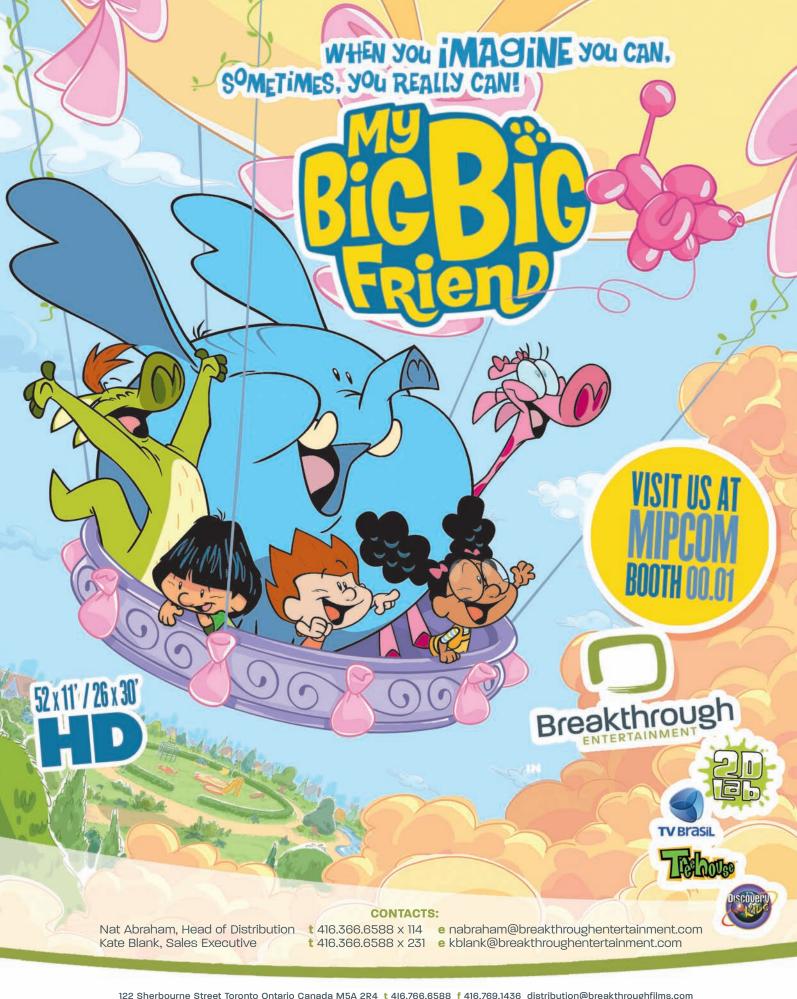
The number of global registered virtual world members attests to the fact that audiences/users are very attracted to these spaces. A recent report from international virtual world specialist KZero, in fact, shows kids are also the fastest-growing group of registrants. KZero estimated the number of accounts belonging to kids ages five to 10 increased from 100 million to 114 million in the first nine months of 2009, while tween/teen (ages 10 to 15) memberships shot up by 100 million to a total of 334 million globally.

Follow the money

Crudely there are two ways to pay for content production—either a commercial organization funds it via advertising or some other brand visibility, or users pay for it up front.

In relation to ad-supported content, more money was spent by advertisers online than on television for the first time in the UK in 2009. Put simply, the money which used to fund TV production is moving into digital spaces, lowering the license fees paid by linear broadcasters. However, the reason the content got made in the first place—i.e. that products are inherently uninteresting and audiences need to be entertained to endure ads—hasn't changed. So it's reasonable to expect that brands will increasingly fund digital content production.

In relation to user-funded content, resistance to paying for things online is diminished every time someone buys a product from Amazon or uses PayPal. Even purely virtual goods are proving themselves to be increasingly valuable. Facebook regulars are happily kitting out their





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CORPORATE DELEGATION





Farmville abodes and sending their friends virtual gifts, and KZero predicts the revenue derived from virtual worlds will rise from US\$2 billion to US\$9 billion by 2013.

Users = money
The only people I ever hear telling me it's not possible to make money online are TV people trying to generate revenue from television content in digital spaces. "You can't make money out of TV online," seems to be a more accurate statement. Surprisingly, you also can't make money from putting radio on TV.

The truth is that it's possible to generate revenue from content designed for online consumption. Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) now sits at about US\$1.40 for every active virtual world member—not just premium subscribers, but everyone visiting those sites.

With well-known worlds like Habbo reporting a global membership of more than 145 million, and niche brands such as WeeWorld or Moshi Monsters attracting 30 million and seven million members, respectively, the economic argument speaks for itself.

The numbers also scale quickly. If, for example, you were able to create a site that handled micro-transactions and attracted 200,000 visitors a month, the revenue on an ARPU of US\$1.42 would be around US\$3.5 million in the first year.

Subsidize production and stay creative

Ad-funded television production is being transformed by the emergence of the digital space. A fragmented TV market puts downward pressure on licensing fees. So there could come a point in the not-too-distant future when TV series will only get made to promote another facet of the brand that already generates enough cash to subsidize production and distribution. This is currently common with merchandising-led properties. However TV networks remain nervous about kids TV shows made explicitly to sell toys. The digital space offers opportunities to keep the focus on the content, but still sell both digital and real-world experiences and objects direct to consumers at the peak point of engagement.

From average to special
The next generation of televisions will be internet-enabled, and quickly the differentiator on broadcast's



Both tween/teen virtual worlds Habbo and WeeWorld have established that micro-transactions can add up to big bucks when it comes to delivering content directly to the end user (see "Real revenue in virtual goods," p. 63 for more)

stronghold platform will become convenience. Digital content will be available on-demand, while broadcast content will be available only when a network wants you to see it.

Traditionally television has created value by launching hits in local markets with limited choice. This has become harder and harder to do as the market splinters. As a result, in fear of alienating a fraction of the increasingly fragmented audience, commissioners (and I was one) are under subtle and not-so-subtle pressure to pick up "average" content that offends no one.

But consider this—in an on-demand universe, why would a viewer "demand" a show that was in any way average? Globally available on-demand content derives value from superserving niche global audiences with unique content that feels tailored to the end-user's tastes and preferences. This is great news for inventive producers as the ability to create unique content with the power to seduce global niche audiences is about to become *the* premium attribute.

Owning the audience

One of my client's series recently drew a record audience to the channel airing it in their territory. Ratings spiked just before the show in question aired and fell right off when it was over. The license fee paid to my client covered a fraction of production costs, leaving dwindling international fees and DVD sales to make up the shortfall while the broadcaster's ratings and audience share benefited from a brand my client created!

If my client sold this content directly for the price of an iTunes single to 25% of the viewers regularly watching it on the aforementioned terrestrial channel, they would have returned a significant profit, with the revenue from the rest of the world registering as pure gravy.

The good news is that digital media creates the opportunity for creators to reap the rewards of their creativity by reclaiming the customer and forming a direct and monetizeable relationship with fans.

Moreover, owning detailed customer data is of huge value when offering additional products and experiences based around a brand, as well as when developing and launching new properties and products.

Finally...

Someone told me the other day that a colleague had been fired for calling out a web address prefaced by "www" because "it's just understood that all URLs carry that prefix." And another friend related that halfway through a meeting with a network, one of its executives exclaimed in a fit of pique, "I wish I could just turn the internet off!"

Whether your organization is desperate to be perceived as so tech-savvy that it will fire people for a precarious lapse in digital etiquette or it's so frustrated by digital uncertainty its executives suffer touretic outbursts, there is no doubt that most media organizations find the current speed of evolution a bit dizzying—at best it's occasionally bewildering, at worst it's a source of constant terror. Perhaps this list will help you meet either scenario with a little more calm confidence as we move forward together.

Jesse Cleverly runs Londonbased Connective Media (www.connectivemedia.tv), which specializes in crafting transitional digital strategies and implementing them via customized IP-based solutions.





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A cross-country check-up reveals the licensing biz in the big-five Euro territories is on the mend, with the UK leading the way

by amanda burgess and gary rusak

he last time we took a temperature read of the licensing climates in the big-five Euro territories, it turned out to be just weeks before the global economy took a nosedive. Certainly, the signs of the economic downturn were already there as we carried out research and interviews over the course of the summer of 2008. So two years later, as the news emanating from major financial centers indicates it's time for cautious optimism, it seemed like a good time to check in with the European consumer products market. How are kids licensors and licensees faring in the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain? Well, keep reading.

The UK looks for green shoots as economy thaws

While the road has been rough, there is reason to breathe a bit easier about the UK economy. After entering its worst post-war recession in 2008, the UK economy grew by 1.1% in Q2, representing its fastest growth in the past four years. Although there are real fears that the rise in the price of commodities and the British pound's performance will adversely affect consumer spending, many licensors surveyed believe the worst days are behind them.

"Customers are still buying and there has really not been a noticeable drop in retail

sales," says Graham Saltmarsh, UK licensing director for Turner CN Enterprises.

Paul Bufton, GM of Warner Bros. Consumer Products EMEA, agrees. "There is definitely a renewed sense of positivity and that we're coming out on the other side of this crisis," he says. "I think the risk-aversion we've experienced at retail is easing ever so slightly."

The good news is also reflected in an 8% jump in toy sales in the first six months of 2010, according to the latest numbers from industry tracker The NPD Group. The UK outperformed its neighbors in the category, registering the biggest percentage increase in Europe.

In terms of retail, however, the UK licensing industry has yet to experience the last of the fallout from the 2008 collapse of high street retailer Woolworths that took a significant chunk out of licensor and licensee bottom lines.

"Woolworths' demise had a big impact on the licensing market in the UK," says Clare Piggott, VP of Nickelodeon Consumer Products UK. "There has been a major ripple effect. I think it's fair to say that a great deal of that Woolworths spend just has not rematerialized."

Bettina Koeckler, SVP of licensing for EMEA at Chorion, says her company has also felt the bite from Woolworths' failure, but the situation is improving-it's even had some positive side-effects. "I think it left a big gap in everybody's numbers," she says. "When it comes to





SPAA is the industry body that represents independent film and television producers in Australia. The SPAA Conference is the largest and most significant screen industry gathering in the Southern Hemisphere and will be held in Sydney 16-19 November 2010. It is the premier business and networking event for television producers, broadcasters and distributors.

25 years

With the introduction of generous financial incentives for Australian productions, children's film and television is well placed to joint venture with international broadcasters and distributors to deliver high quality programs for worldwide broadcast. Australia is highly regarded as a co-production territory for animation, preschool, and live action drama programming.

The SPAA conference program offers a mix of interviews, pitching opportunities, panel discussions and social events with opportunities for business development, meetings and networking in a relaxed environment.

With a dedicated children's strand, it attracts high profile international executives in the kids TV business. Previous years guests have included:

Jules Borkent, Nickelodeon USA; Marc Buhaj, Jetix Europe; François Deplanck, Canal Plus; Nick Wilson, Five UK; Sebastian Debertin, KI.KA; Dea Connick-Perez, Discovery Kids; Scott Dyer, Corus Entertainment and Bill Schultz, Taffy Entertainment. Guests have also included key executives from Decode, National Geographic, YTV, Teletoon, BBC, ITV, ZDF, Nickelodeon, Disney and Cartoon Network.

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toys, I know Woolworths' volume hasn't been completely divided up just yet, but it has forced retailers and licensors to work closer together to drive traffic into stores."

While the high street continues to try and make up the loss, UK-centric online portals such as Play.com, with its individual branded sections, have started to make some noise. There has also been a spate of pop-up shop opportunities emerging. "Our Harry Potter pop-up shop at the London Eye was massively successful," reports Bufton. Although he is hesitant to release any numbers, he says the merchandise sold through last year.

Property-wise, in a market known for its lack of shelf space and risk-averse retailers, the safe bets still seem to pay off. Blockbuster IP like Dora the Explorer, Superman and Thomas & Friends continue to rule the roost. And more UK-focused brands like Peppa Pig and Mr. Men have also found reliable success in a market where both consumers and retailers are watching their pennies.

Perhaps the most interesting innovation on the retail front over the past few months was one borrowed from the format of popular Brit reality TV series Dragon's Den, in which hopeful inventors pitch their ideas before a panel of entrepreneurs. Retailer Argos reportedly held a one-day event recently where it invited licensors to pitch their properties and product lines directly to the massmarket chain's buying teams. "Argos really showed a willingness to explore new areas," says Piggott. "It was great to be able to get direct feedback instantly."

French licensing on a slower track to recovery

As the EU market shows overall signs of recovery from the global economic crisis, France continues to lag a bit behind. According to France Customs Office data, the country will post its seventh-consecutive yearly trade deficit and the second-largest for the territory at US\$25 billion by year's end.

"It takes France a lot longer to get started again economically-we're a conservative country," notes Marina Narishkin, MD at CPLG France. "From a licensing perspective, when things aren't going well, consumers clam up and shelf space closes to untested properties. There's a lot more reticence now than in the past."

And the reticence of typically conservative retailers is extending to licensees, who still aren't seeing pre-crisis levels of turnover. "Even if they are very enthusiastic about a brand, manufacturers are not prepared to pay a high minimum guarantee, preferring to pay royalties dependent on sales," says Brigitte Legendre, director of con-

That preference could account for the uptick in royalty rates recently noticed by licensors. "Since April, we've seen an increase in royalties, which is very positive," says Narishkin. "We were at 11%, but the economic crisis drove rates down to 8% or 9%. Today, big properties can still command 12% and sports properties 14%, but that's very high for the market."

When it comes to blockbuster properties in France, few have been bigger than Dora the Explorer. "Dora is still on the market, but losing share. There's a real lack of girls properties and we're all waiting for the new hit," says Legendre, who's hoping Moonscoop's preschool series Chloe's Closet (France 5 and Playhouse Disney) can fill the void. With a Bandai toy range set to debut in 2011, the program focuses heavily on playsets, drawing on the show's dress-up themes.

But don't count the reigning preschool princess out quite yet. "Managing a property like Dora and getting people to understand where the right level is can be challenging," says NCP VP Laurent Taieb. "It's tough to move from being a smash hit on-air to a very good property. Partners tend to only see the decline, but we've got to keep in mind that Dora is still the number-two preschool property in France [NPD Toys ePOS-January to June, 2010]."

That growth-and-decline dynamic is something the French market is witnessing with licensed product categories as well. "Last year, the economic crisis didn't affect publishing-forecasts were increasing," says

sumer products at Paris-based Moonscoop. Legendre. "But now, all of the publishers are in trouble." She adds that DVDs and video games, once strong categories, are losing ground due to TV competition and piracy. Hoping to buck that trend, CPLG's Narishkin is betting on Ubisoft's The Raving Rabbids. Moving a video game property straight into licensing without TV support is a first for the French market, but CPLG has already signed 15 licensees and is looking for more. As for trends on the rise, direct-to-retail deals are gaining momentum, with Carre-

four as the most active retailer, though not all licensors are convinced of the strategy's market relevance. "It can be good for certain

Dora mania may have subsided a bit in France, but she's still the number-two preschool property in the country

Sports licensing to kick-start a subdued German market

When we last took a temperature read on the kids licensing landscape in Germany, it wasn't exactly sizzling, with a dropping birth rate, lower levels of discretionary income and falling sales in the licensed toy market. Flash forward two years and the needle has moved only very slightly into warmer territory.

According to the German Federal Statistics Office, the country's retail sales levels remain subdued, hovering at the lower end of revenues measured since 2004.

"We are dependent on the US market in the toy category, but the economic crisis that the US and UK have faced hasn't hit our market quite as hard," says Christoph Ahmadi, director of marketing and sales for German kidcaster Super RTL. "We didn't have high growth, but not as much of a drop, either."

The territory's largest licensing category—apparel—is also facing downward pressure from a lower-valued US dollar, an issue compounded by increasing cotton prices. "It has become very difficult for many licensees to receive orders from retailers in the apparel category because the pricing is a challenge," says Uli Stoef, CEO of Munich-based licensing agency m4e.

According to Andreas Niedergesaess, VP of Nickelodeon Consumer Products North, the pricing challenge affects all categories in the German licensing market. "Buyers are asking for new properties without taking on any sell-through risk. This means that licensees are really under pressure because of their purchase order on voluntary acceptance of returned goods, which will also have an impact on pricing," he says.

Increased margin pressure on German licensees is causing many to become more selective in acquiring licenses, so licensors need an established brand to convince partners to dig into it or must be willing to take on some of the risk themselves. "Sometimes as a licensor, you must finance and deliver the product to retailers yourself—a trend that is changing the landscape," says Stoef.

Licensing, however, remains a key sales strategy for German retailers, with both CNA and The Metro Group (which owns hypermarket chain Real), as the most active in the traditional retail space. RTL's Ahmadi notes that pharmacy chain Mueller has organically grown its licensing business over the past couple of years since its entrée into toy sales five years ago, but Toys 'R' Us still sits atop the licensed toy heap. Stoef shares that view, noting that TRU understands the power of brands and what licensing can bring to retail in terms of margin and traffic if executed correctly.

Dominance of traditional retailers aside, it's discounters like Kick and online retailers that are driving growth in the sales of consumer products, licensors say. "Discounters have been the most aggressive retailers over the last few years, doing huge numbers in toys, games, home video, gifts, apparel, accessories and consumer electronics categories," says Niedergesaess. "Consumers are aware that products from discounters generally offer good quality due to high testing standards."

Ahmadi notes that online retailers have become more active in the last few years, particularly Amazon, and not just in publishing but toys as well. "We have completely focused our business on online toy retailers," he says. "They are growing and so is their relevance." Niedergesaess says this trend, and Amazon's strength, is prompting brick-and-mortar retailers to look into online opportunities to increase sales."

In terms of licensed product categories, apparel is strongest, and despite noted challenges is posting double-digit growth according

product categories, or even across retailers on short-term blockbuster film programs," says Narishkin. "But for long-term brandbuilding, DTRs may not be the answer in France," she contends.

In contrast, Warner Bros. Consumer Products France is pursuing DTRs for its portfolio of evergreen brands, including Looney Tunes. "Direct-to-retail is definitely a growing trend, and what is new is that it is going beyond the traditional categories into areas such as food," says WBCP France executive director Anoush Kevorkian. "Major players including Systeme U and Carrefour have launched massive programs. For example, Systeme U has introduced over 100 SKUs to date with Looney Tunes Active."

to licensors. "In Germany, the only figures you get are for the toy and video markets," notes Rinsche. "So if you look at apparel, a significant category for licensing, we do not have any numbers beyond our own brands."

According to German research firm Icon Kids & Youth, computer and interactive hardware and software remain the number-one products in terms of usage, with mobile applications a growing category. "Consumer electronics, along with fashion, look like very positive new categories for licensing depending on the price point," says Niedergesaess.

Movie and TV licensing, particularly when it comes to preschool, are still key drivers in the German licensing market. "Animation properties are doing well, but there is a trend towards live-action properties, as girls ages 10 and up—a developing target group—are less likely to watch animation," says Niedergesaess.

Not surprisingly, sports licensing took center stage this year, with licensing for FIFA and the German Football Federation taking the market by storm thanks to consumer interest in the World Cup. "Panini is forecasting 110 million sticker packs sold in Germany alone, with seven to eight million for trading cards," says Stoef. "It's a huge revenue stream for licensing." That revenue generation allows sports licenses to command a 15%-plus royalty rate—well above the standard 8% to 12% in other categories.

But is the overall licensing market growing in pace with the sports category? Not quite. "Licensing is still growing at a rate of 6% overall, in line with our main property,

SpongeBob SquarePants," says Niedergesaess. "The German market is underdeveloped in comparison to France, the UK and the US, so there is still potential to grow further. And the industry has moved into new fields such as fashion, sports and celebrity licensing." Super RTL's head of merchandising and licensing, Hendrick Rinsche, concurs. "We are still under-represented when it comes to licensing-there should be more growth potential for our market," he says. "But German mothers are conservative, so it's not

product sales in households."

Italy inches upward

Hard hit by the general economic malaise, Italy has shown some signs of recovery; news that will be welcomed by all mining the territory for consumer products revenue.

According to numbers just released from the country's national statistic bureau ISTAT, Italy's economy grew for the second con-

Bugs and WBCP's stable of iconic IPs have been making moves outside of their stronghold apparel category in Italy secutive quarter. Its GDP was up 0.4%, matching Q1's rate of growth. On a year-to-year basis the Italian economy expanded 1.1% from 2009, and industrial production for Q1 was up 7.8% over 2009's figure.

Maurizio Disterphano, GM of WBCP Italy, agrees that things are looking up after some tight times. "In the retail environment we're seeing the first signs of increased consumption by Italian customers," he says. "Recovery is surely more conservative than in the industrial sector, but overall the growth should impact positively on the distribution environment this year."

In the toy market, Italy lags behind other European countries, registering a 2% growth in toy sales in the first half of 2010, according to the latest NPD numbers. However, after the long recession any positive uptick is being heralded by those in the industry.

"The markets are still feeling the effects of the global economic situation," says Stefano Salis, Italian territory manager at Turner CN Enterprises. "Consumer spending is comparatively low and this inevitably influences our licensing activities. Retailers remain risk-averse and are focusing on tried-and-tested brands rather than new properties." However, he does report that IP such as Ben 10 and Bakugan are performing well in the tough market. And Flor, a telenova aimed at girls, is a somewhat newer IP that has found an audience and backing at retail.

WBCP's Disterphano says that the major retailers are backing the IP owners classic catalogue. "Buyers have reduced their branded product range since the onset of the crisis," he says. "In the past it was possible to find the same item for five or six different properties...now it's more like two or three...Very often they went for the safe choice and the evergreen brands."

This is good news for WBCP and its robust stable of vintage IP, as Disterphano reports solid growth outside of the traditional apparel category with notable increases in sales of personal care, food & beverage, and toy items.

Milan-based Sanrio Licensing president Roberto Lanzi also reported that moving beyond flagship property Hello Kitty's traditional strength in apparel has been a winning move for the company in Italy.

"There is a lot of interest in other categories from homewares to electronics," Lanzi says, adding that the discount tier of retail



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is exerting its power.
"Their business is increasing and they are now looking at licensing with more interest."

As for retail growth, although the country is still very much ruled by the fashion houses and mass-market retail, online retailers and kiosks—which stock periodicals, snacks and small novelty items—continue to grow market share.

"In the last few years, kiosks have been the most outstanding channel for us," says Salis. But there is a drawback in that the small retail outlets have very limited shelf space. "We're quickly arriving at a saturation point," he contends. Similarly, Disterphano says kiosks remain a big business, but online is growing fast, too.

Spain starts to see the light

In many ways Spain's continuous economic troubles have taken a backseat this summer to its glorious runs at the World Cup, Formula 1 Grand Prix and the Tour de France. "Winning a championship, or three, actually does have an effect on consumption," says Nickelodeon Consumer Products' Taieb, who overees the Spanish market along with France. "People are feeling happy," he explains. "It's not a main driver, of course, but it helps."

It is understandable that any piece of good news is worth clinging to in an economy that is just emerging from its worst slump in 60 years. According to the Bank of Spain, GDP rose 0.2% from the previous quarter in Q2, representing the first expansion since early 2008. As well, consumption rose by 0.7% from the previous quarter, faring about half a percentage point better than the government had predicted. Another positive sign is that the toy market grew 6% during the first six months of the year, according to NPD. The increase is the second-largest in the EU behind the UK.

According to Maria Doolan, brand and business development manager at Madrid-based Zinkia, the news for licensed products in the territory is getting better. Retail is beginning to realize that in a tough economy consumers like to stick with familiar brands.

"The Spanish market is still quite depressed, but you can see there is a big appetite for a good licensed program," Doolan says. Zinkia's program based its property Poyco has continued to grow across all categories in a tough retail market.

"Retailers are looking for the next big thing," but it has to be a really big thing," notes Doolan, adding that the retail environment is becoming more open to cross-promotions and servicing different tiers of consumers.

"The bigger mass chains like Carrefour, Hypercore and Toys 'R' Us are becoming more innovative and organized," she says.

The good news is that with increased immigration shoring up the population over the last few years, the emergence of

DTT kids channel CLAN TV, and the diversification of predominant retailer El Corte Inglés, the stage was set for a blockbuster program to emerge. Enter SpongeBob SquarePants.

"SpongeBob is just on fire, it's the place to be," says Taieb. "I have seen this phenomenon only once before with Dora in France in 2007. It's like the magic that only happens once in a lifetime, but it's happened twice."

According to Taieb, the demand for SpongeBob merch started ramping up in the spring, and by June it had become the number-five license in the country. "We were nowhere a few months ago and now we can't keep up," he says, adding he doesn't really know why the IP took off when it did.

That said there are still many stumbling blocks on the way to total recovery for the European nation. On July 1, the government raised the VAT tax from 16% to 18%, a move that critics say could curb consumption. As well, the Spanish government has

continued to withdraw public works programs and restrict designated economic stimulus dollars—moves that have contributed to the country's decade-high unemployment rate of 20.1%.

And unlike some of its European neighbors, Spain's retail environment is still heavily dotted with mom-and-pop shops (estimates indicate they represent 40% of retail sales), which make it difficult for licensed goods to achieve full distribution. "Although there is a good network of wholesalers, there are thousands of shops," says Taieb. "It makes certain avenues unavailable, like direct-to-retail."





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Regional merch programs shine against the backdrop of globalization

hile the word globalization has become something of a mantra, chanted during conference calls and business lunches from Taipei to Tuscaloosa, those in the consumer products industry know that there is still an appetite for regionalized goods. A small design tweak here, a cultural nod there can in fact help smaller, non-blockbuster properties sell into more territories. Similarly, IP with global pretensions can benefit from paying attention to gaps in the local market to create countryspecific product. So even though technological advances now help keep people the world over in constant contact, differences between cultures and consumer wants and needs still exist. In short, what plays in Peoria might not work in Pakistan, and that's well worth noting.

Making niche IP road-worthy

Rob Corney, MD at London-based Bulldog Licensing, puts it bluntly. "One approach to licensing programs is the Toy Story 3, cultural imperialism type," he says, describing what has become known as the massive, multi-territory rollout. In this case, untold amounts of media exposure floats a CP program that is pretty much identical in every major territory and available at all tiers of retail. The other is the focused niche program. "When you haven't got that huge media impact, you have to think a bit more laterally," he savs.

Corney speaks from experience. Bulldog took UK-hatched design brand Goochicoo, targeting infants and their parents, into Spain, Israel and France in 2004, and is now just launching it in the US. Goochicoo features

by gary rusak cute caricatures of babies accompanied by

humorous slogans and is driven primarily by apparel and accessories categories.

A design-led brand is easier to localize, Corney admits, because it is not burdened by the pigeonholing that often accompanies a TV-based property. As such an IP's main driver, the TV series, appears pretty much the same in every region and doesn't allow for a lot of local adaptation. However, there are still many considerations when taking an IP out of its original territory.

"We are bringing Goochicoo into the US, so we have had to develop suitable themes," Corney says. "So we have sports like American football and ice hockey and a military theme, too. We also have developed an Irish heritage design that wouldn't really work in the UK."

Initially, Bulldog also faced a number of language problems that had to be rectified to make the IP work in other markets. "One of our popular designs in the UK is a baby spitting out peas with the slogan 'Give Peas a Chance' written underneath," says Corney. "But the translation didn't work at all in some

territories."

"We work with a network of worldwide sub-agents to ensure that our licensing programs, although global in reach, are executed on a local level."

-Rob Corney, Bulldog Licensing MD

Spain proved to be the only exception, where a simple change in phrasing did the trick. It was a stroke of linguistic luck that can't be counted upon, but nevertheless did solve the regionalization problem in this instance. In other territories, however, that particular design was simply not utilized.

Corney is quick to point out that regionalizing an IP and developing extensions that play in just one territory can be a tricky business. "The obvious pitfall is that you don't want to be in the UK sitting back and wondering what people in France might like," he says. "That can lead to the use of cultural stereotypes and worse."

The way to avoid this problem is to have sources on the ground that can inform the designers of the proper approach to take to each region.

"We work with a network of worldwide sub-agents to ensure that our licensing programs, although global in their reach, are executed on a local level," says Corney. "This ensures all our brands are brought to market in the most appropriate

and saleable way for each territory in which we operate."

Tweaking a global icon

Another example of a brand that has mastered the art of designing for different territories while still keeping its core attributes intact is Sanrio's Hello Kitty. While Japan-based Sanrio necessarily keeps tabs on the various iterations of 35-year-old Hello Kitty, it has a loose leash on the character that has allowed the iconic feline to appeal to a number of demos from core girls right up to adults. And because Hello Kitty isn't content-driven, the brand persists primarily on the strength of its regional appeal and targeted products.

The latest successful version is Hello Kitty London, which has been developed by UKbased licensing agent Fluid World. The agency took on the brand in August 2008 and has breathed new life into what was a small and highly fragmented program in the region.

"We were tasked with filling the logical gaps," says Libby Grant, brand director at Fluid World. She explains that the company's first



order of business was to cultivate a DTR deal with high street retail chain Marks&Spencer and mine a perhaps little-known attribute of the Hello Kitty brand.

"It's actually part of the Hello Kitty story—she was born and then moved to London," says Grant. "We were fortunate enough to be able to play on that. We then created essentially a sub-brand that was very much localized and is not used in any other territory."

The Hello Kitty London brand covers a number of categories and, according to Grant, it's been a big success. Although Sanrio as a private company is hesitant to discuss sell-through rates, she did say that the line launched in just one category—older girls clothing—and has now rolled out into fashion accessories, food and health & beauty. Making Hello Kitty a Londoner entailed depicting her standing next to British landmarks like Big Ben and utilizing the Union Jack in many of the designs. Grant credits Sanrio with having the trust in its local licensees to create the products who appeal to a regional marketplace.

"Sanrio encourages creativity," Grant says. "It doesn't create a 20-page style guide and handcuff you to it. It's very open and realizes that licensees have very creative people working for them that understand the local market."

Keeping an ear to the ground

Taking the regionalization idea in another direction altogether is Cartoon Network Enterprises Asia Pacific with its Ben 10 offshoot, Gwen 10. Although the Ben 10 program has succeeded internationally, amassing a roster of global partners in key categories like master toy and interactive, CNE Asia Pacific is exploring a different aspect of the IP to develop a program that works particularly

"We held several Ben 10 events across the region and noticed that girls were attending dressed head-to-toe in Ben 10 outfits," says Dulce Lim-Chen, VP of CNE Asia Pacific, describing the genesis of the regionalized Gwen 10 program. "[We realized that]

well for a specific region.

CN Enterprises Asia Pacific developed a unique girls fashion line around female character Gwen from boys action IP Ben 10 to meet a regional consumer need.

there was obviously a strong demand for girls properties in Asia...Gwen, who is Ben's cousin in the series, really fit that bill."

CNE Asia Pacific then developed an entire Gwen collection aimed at capturing the girls five to 12 demo. The merch is inspired by what the character herself would wear, including lines of apparel, shoes, bags, hair

accessories, and toys, games and outdoor goods. In Australia, the line launched at the end of June exclusively with mass-market retailer Big W. The Southwest Asia rollout will continue throughout 2010, and currently non-exclusive retail deals are being hammered out.

CNE Asia Pacific is taking this regional IP extension seriously, as evidenced by the full-throttle promotion behind the line. In Australia, CNE launched The Search for Gwen's 10, a contest that rewards the entrants who come up with the best reasons why they should be a part of Gwen's inner circle. The 10 winners received Big W gift certificates, a interview feature in *Total Girl Magazine* and a VIP experience at an Australian performance of the Ben 10 Live Tour.

"The Gwen property works particularly well in Asia as it offers a fresh alternative to what's already on the market," says Lim-Chen. "We are now looking at making the collection available in key markets such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand."

By working closely with local agents, Bulldog Licensing has managed to turn once UK-centric infant property Goochicoo into a world traveller

Bulldog Licensing > www.bulldog-licensing.com
Cartoon Network > www.cartoonnetwork.com
Fluid World > www.fluid-world.co.uk





On the move







Kelly Henwood



Rob O'Neill



Amy Taylo

Activision Blizzard (Los Angeles, California, 310-255-2000) The online, PC, console and handheld game publisher has appointed marketing and advertising vet **Eric Hirshberg** as CEO of Activision Publishing, effective September 7. In his new role, Hirshberg will oversee the division's operational management, including its product development functions, consumer marketing activities and studio. He's replacing Mike Griffith, who was promoted to vice chairman of Activision Blizzard. Hirshberg joins Activision from Deutsch LA, a full-service integrated marketing and advertising agency, where he most recently served as CEO and chief creative officer. During his 13 years leading the company, Hirshberg developed strategies and multimedia campaigns for clients like Sony's PlayStation 3, DirectTV and HTC, and became seasoned in the video game, subscription-based entertainment and mobile content industries.

Cartoon Network (Atlanta, Georgia, 404-827-1500): Rob O'Neill has been named to the newly created position of VP of program scheduling for Cartoon Network. His responsibilities include supervising the day-to-day on-air program scheduling of both Cartoon Network and Boomerang. In this capacity, he's also acting as departmental lead for long-range calendar planning, working to develop creative strategies for on-air stunts and special events surrounding the network's library of original and acquired programming. Prior to joining CN, O'Neill did a 13-year stint at Disney ABC Cable Networks Group, where he worked in programming and acquisitions. The network has also upped Ryan Adams to the newly created position of VP of program and schedule operations for Cartoon Network and Adult Swim US. In his new post, Adams will serve as strategic scheduling lead for all program and on-air promotion operations for Cartoon Network, Adult Swim and Boomerang, helping to identify new promotional opportunities and programming formats for recent changes/expansions within each network. He also will continue to act as the primary liaison between the networks, their on-air departments, Turner Broadcasting's network operations and Turner's digital media technologies division. Adams first joined TBS in 1996, working on the floor as a news coordinator for CNN's Headline News.

Gong Media (Surrey, England, 44-203-286-3922): **Vanessa Albeck**, former director of marketing solutions at Yahoo!, has been named director of marketing TV-Mobile-Internet for Gong Media, the international network aimed at 15- to 24-year-olds. Albeck will oversee the network's marketing and the distribution of the Gong brand across all platforms

in Europe and the US. Increasing brand loyalty and managing international content and product marketing will be Albeck's main goals. Albeck began her career in 1997 as a consultant at Accenture (ex-Andersen Consulting). In 2000, she joined TF1Publicité, where she helped launch the Pricing and Yield division and managed commercial offers before moving over to Yahoo! France in 2005.

Nickelodeon (New York, New York, 212-846-8018): **Keith Dawkins** has been promoted to the role of SVP and GM of Nicktoons and Teen-Nick. In his newly expanded role, Dawkins adds oversight of TeenNick, Nickelodeon's 24-hour network for teens, to his current role as GM of Nicktoons. Dawkins will run the day-to-day operations for the teen network, including on-air programming, scheduling and marketing, and will work with MTV Networks' Affiliate Sales organization on the channel's distribution rollout. Dawkins will continue reporting to Sarah Levy, COO of the Nickelodeon/MTVN Kids and Family Group. Over the past seven years, Dawkins has built the Nicktoons network with a strong focus on the boys market. As the first GM of Nicktoons, Dawkins manages the daily operations of the network and has spearheaded several key partnerships, including a deal with Marvel Animation that brought three new series to the channel.

Novel Entertainment (Oxford, England, 44-186-581-1562): The prodoco has appointed **Kelly Henwood** as children's brand manager to lead the future development of its TV properties. In her new role, Henwood is responsible for coordinating a range of brand partners across a variety of product areas, as well as initiating marketing campaigns and cross-promotional strategies. She joins the company with five years experience in consumer products, marketing and licensing. Henwood will also work closely with Novel's licensing agency CPLG and international distributors, as well as expand the online presence of the company's brands.

Sanrio (Torrance, California, 310-896-3272): The home of Hello Kitty has bolstered its senior management team with three new appointments. **Jill Koch** is now VP of brand management and marketing, responsible for maintaining the identity of the Sanrio brand and its portfolio of characters. Koch will work closely with the design team on product development and brand extensions while continuing to oversee the expansion of the company's co-brand initiatives and manage PR and marketing. Koch has been with Sanrio since 2002 and moves

from her most recent role as senior director of brand management and marketing. Meanwhile, taking Ithe newly created role of executive director of retail business development is **Cindy Elfenbein**, who's been brought on-board to develop new business opportunities with key retailers and create unique partnerships and promotions between Sanrio licensees and retailers. Prior to joining Sanrio, Elfenbein held senior management positions at Sony Pictures Entertainment, DIC Entertainment and Warner Bros. Consumer Products. For her part, **Linh Forse** has been promoted to senior licensing manager. She is now responsible for managing the company's licensing partners in the US, Canada and Mexico and her focus will be on expanding distribution in the Canadian market and developing licensing programs for emerging characters. Forse joined Sanrio in 2008 as licensing manager.

Scholastic (New York, New York, 212-343-6100): **Matt Brown** has been named president of Klutz, the kids activity division of global children's publisher Scholastic. Now also an SVP at Scholastic, Brown will lead the creative direction of Klutz, managing the strategic development of the brand. Brown, who takes the reins from recently retired Klutz co-founder John Cassidy, assumes his new responsibilities on September 7. Over his 15 years in the kids business, Brown has been named on numerous patents and patent applications for building toys, electronic learning aids, activity and creativity toys, video games, social networking systems, adaptive learning technologies and consumer packaged goods. He has also led a variety of teams in the development, customization and implementation of seven different types of curricula, including language arts.

Skywriter Media and Entertainment Group (Toronto, Canada, 416-966-4759): Skywriter has appointed **Gwen Jones McCauley** as VP of distribution and acquisitions, where she will oversee the company's distribution division while **Paula McLaren** is on maternity leave. Bringing along experience in international sales and distribution, McCauley joins the company from Cookie Jar Entertainment, where she served as VP of distribution and sales operations and was responsible for Canadian presales and library and home entertainment sales. Before that, McCauley held various senior sales management positions during a stint at BBC Worldwide Canada

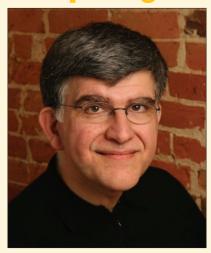
Universal Studios (Los Angeles, California, 818-777-2067): Moving up to EVP of Universal Partnerships & Licensing, Amy Taylor will continue to oversee UP&L's North American promotions, worldwide licensing, digital and interactive activities, and retail development for Universal Pictures and Focus Features. Taylor also continues to manage licensing, promotional and retail development efforts for the Universal library, which includes franchise properties like Curious George and Scarface. Her team is also currently handling promotional efforts for the Universal films that are being produced with Hasbro, including *Battleship* and Stretch Armstrong. During her 13-year tenure at Universal, Taylor held senior leadership roles in both Universal's promotions and consumer products groups, where she helped launch merch and promotions for event films like The Cat in the Hat and The Incredible Hulk. Prior to joining Universal, Taylor held marketing positions with Warner Bros. Consumer Products and Hanna-Barbera, where she looked after Cartoon Network and Turner properties.

CCI's Falzon takes on prestigious academic post

's not as if industry veteran Charles Falzon wasn't busy enough. The current co-chair of bustling Toronto, Canadabased prodco and distribution house CCI Entertainment recently accepted an appointment as chair of Ryerson University's School of Radio and Television Arts (RTA).

For those not familiar with the Canadian institute of higher education, Ryerson, particularly its RTA program, has churned out a good chunk of the country's TV and film talent over the past five decades or so. Falzon had been working as an instructor in the program and was approached over the summer to take the chair post. Accepting a five-year term, he's now getting to work on making his mark on the program that's also been responsible for evolving modern communications theory the world over.

Falzon's got an ambitious plan that will begin with reviewing the current curriculum



Charles Falzon is heading back to school as the new chair of Ryerson University's Radio and TV Arts program

and bringing it more in line with the needs of the international radio and television industries. He'll also devote quite a bit of energy to uncovering resources for the program within Canada and forging stronger links with the industry. Falzon's particularly interested in getting the industry more involved with research being conducted at the school and forming partnerships to further that course. Similarly, Falzon's also looking at forming strategic partnerships internationally with like-minded programs at universities and colleges around the globe.

And don't think Falzon's stepping away from CCI. He's currently executive producer on two of its newest kids series. He's overseeing the production of formatted versions of *Artzooka*, an craft/art-centric series greenlit by CBC in Canada and Nick Germany. The second, *GeoFreakZ*, is a tween-targeted multiplatform project underway for Teletoon Canada that revolves around the treasure-hunt-like activity of geocaching, which is slated to air this fall. **LC**



LA Office RoadShow	Sep. 13-15	Los Angeles, CA	310-275-2088	www.laoffice.com/roadshow	Film/TV/Mktg
Cartoon Forum	Sep. 14-17	Sopron, Hungary	32-2-242-9343	www.cartoon-media.be	Anim/TV
Brand Licensing Europe	Sep. 29-30	London, England	44-208-956-2661	www.brandlicensing.eu	Lic/Merch
MIPCOM Junior	Oct. 2-3	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.mipcomjunior.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
MIPCOM	Oct. 4-8	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.mipcom.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
Fall Toy Preview	Oct. 5-8	Dallas, TX	212-675-1141	www.toyassociation.org	Toys
Frankfurt Book Fair	Oct. 6-10	Frankfurt, Germany	49-69-210-2256	www.book-fair.com	Publishing
New York Comic-Con	Oct. 8-10	New York, NY	203-840-5321	www.newyorkcomiccon.com	Publishing
ABC Kids Show	Oct. 10-13	Las Vegas, NV	210-691-4848	www.theabcshow.com	Toys
China Toy Expo	Oct. 12-14	Shanghai, China	010-66038881-217	www.china-toy-expo.com	Toys/Merch
Ottawa International Animation Festival	Oct. 20-24	Ottawa, Canada	613-232-8769	www.ottawa.awn.com	Anim/TV
Cinekid Festival	Oct. 20-29	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	31-20-531-7890	www.cinekid.nl	Film
Franchising & Licensing Asia	Oct. 21-23	Singapore	65-6467-8385	www.franchiselicenseasia.com	Lic/Merch
KidScreen's Transmedia Bootcamp Amsterdam	Oct. 29	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	416-408-2300	www.kidscreen.com/transmedia	360° brand building
American Film Market	Nov. 3-10	Los Angeles, CA	310-446-1000	www.ifta-online.org	Film
browsergames forum	Nov. 5-6	Frankfurt, Germany	49-40-881-4130	www.bgf2010.com	Inter/Games
SPAA Conference	Nov. 16-19	Sydney, Australia	61-2-9360-8988	www.spaa.org.au	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
Toy and Game Inventor Fair	Nov. 18-19	Chicago, IL	847-677-8277	www.toyandgameinventors.com	Toys/Games
KidScreen's Transmedia Bootcamp Toronto	Nov. 19	Toronto, Canada	416-408-2300	www.kidscreen.com/transmedia	360° brand building
Chicago Toy and Game Fair	Nov. 20-21	Chicago, IL	847-677-8277	www.chitag.com	Toys/Games
Cartoon Feature	Nov. 22-24	Munich, Germany	322-242-9353 (Belgium)	www.cartoon-media.be	Film/Anim
Média-Jeunes	Nov. 26-27	Montreal, Canada	514-597-6809	www.act-aet.tv	Prod/Dist
Dubai World Game Expo	Nov. 29-Dec. 1	Dubai, UAE	971-4362-4717	www.gameexpo.ae	Inter/Games
Dubai International Character & Licensing Fair	Nov. 29-Dec. 1	Dubai, UAE	971-4362-4717	www.character.ae	Lic/Merch
Asia Television Forum	Dec. 8-10	Singapore	65-6780-4697	www.asiatvforum.com	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
Singapore Toy & Comic Convention	Dec. 10-12	Singapore	65-9-001-1101	www.singaporetgcc.com	Lic/Merch
Consumer Electronics Show	Jan. 6-9, 2011	Las Vegas, NV	301-631-3983	www.cesweb.org	Inter/Merch
Retail's BIG Show	Jan. 9-12	New York, NY	708-486-0725	www.nrf.com/annual11	Merchandising
Hong Kong International Licensing Show	Jan. 10-12	Hong Kong	852-183-0668	www.hklicensingshow.com	Lic/Merch
Hong Kong Toys & Games Fair	Jan. 10-13	Hong Kong	852-2240-4435	www.hktoyfair.hktdc.com	Toys
NATPE	Jan. 24-26	Miami, FL	310-453-4440	www.natpe.org	TV/Prod/Prog/Dist
The Toy Fair	Jan. 25-27	London, England	44-207-701-7127	www.toyfair.co.uk	Toys
Nuremberg Toy Fair	Feb. 3-8	Nuremberg, Germany	49-91-1998-1316	www.nurembergtoyfair.com	Toys
Toy Fair	Feb. 13-16	New York, NY	212-675-1141	www.toyassociation.org	Toys/Games
KidScreen Summit	Feb. 15-18	New York, NY	416-408-2300	www.kidscreensummit.com	EVERYTHING KIDS!
Game Developers Conference	Feb. 28-Mar. 4	San Francisco, CA	415-947-6000	www.gdconf.com	Inter/Games
Bologna Children's Book Fair	Mar. 28-30	Bologna, Italy	39-051-282-111	www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it	Pub/Lic
MIPTV	Apr. 4-8	Cannes, France	33-1-4190-4400	www.miptv.com	Prod/Prog/TV/Dist
Cartoons on the Bay	Apr. 7-10	Portofino, Italy	39-06-37-498-315	www.cartoonsbay.com	Anim/TV
London Book Fair	Apr. 11-13	London, England	44-208-271-2124	www.londonbookfair.co.uk	Publishing
Licensing International Expo	June 14-16	Las Vegas, NV	203-882-1300	www.licensingexpo.com	Lic/Merch
	June 21-23	Budapest, Hungary		www.discop.com	

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